10

THE MELANCHOLY of SUZUMIYA HARUHI-CHAN

ART: **PUYO** STORY: **NAGARU TANIGAWA** CHARACTERS: NOIZI ITO

LOOM
WHOA!!

HMM?
KYON, KYON!

SORRY, KYON... TODAY WE HAVE COME TO YOU...
GUYS, COULD YOU QUIT STANDING OVER MY BED LIKE THAT EVERY TIME?

...HUH?
BABAM
...TO SAY GOOD-BYE.

THE MELANCHOLY of SUZUMIYA
HARUHI-CHAN
STORY: NAGARU TANIGAWA ART: PUYO CHARACTERS: NOIZI ITO

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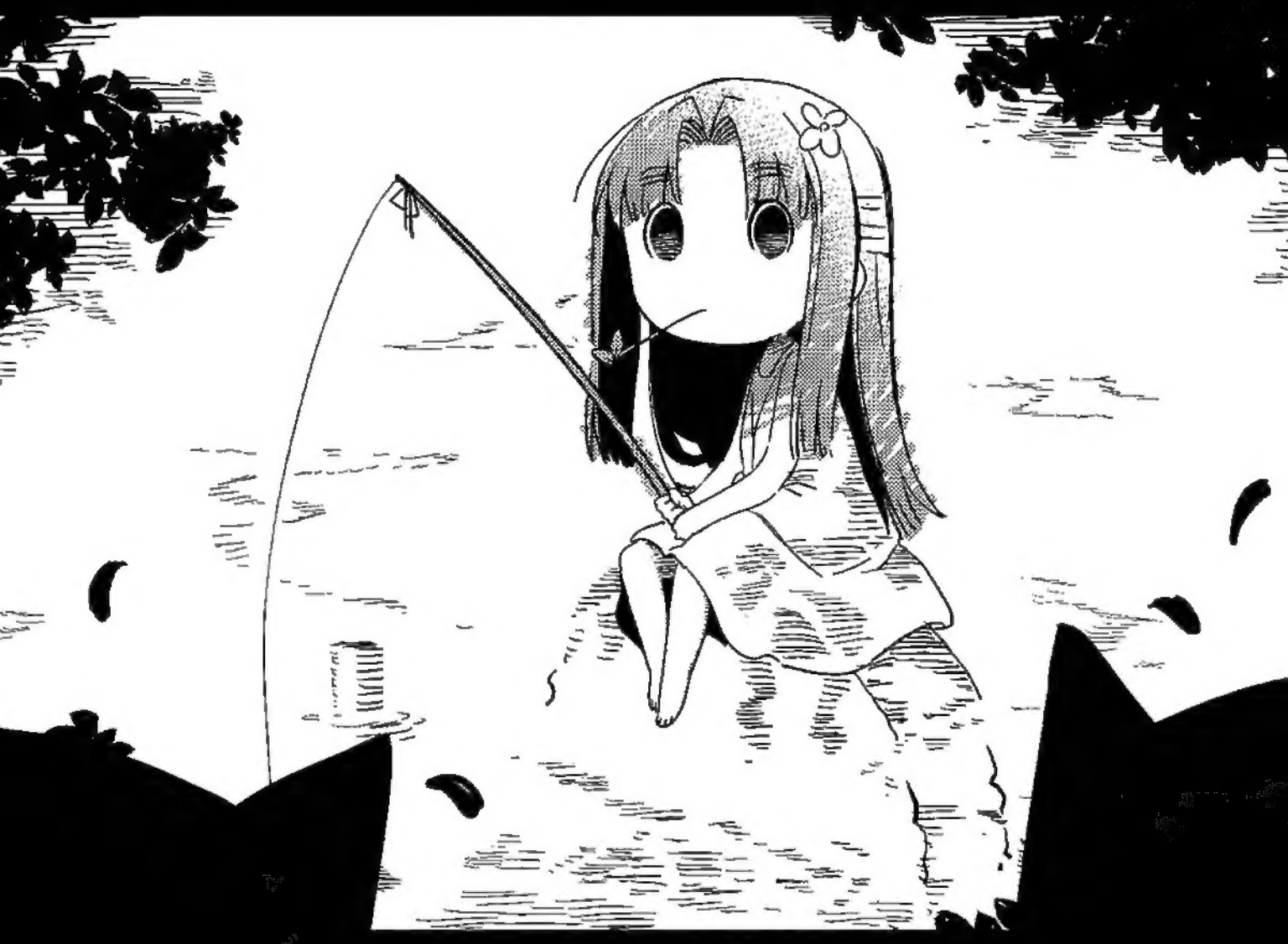


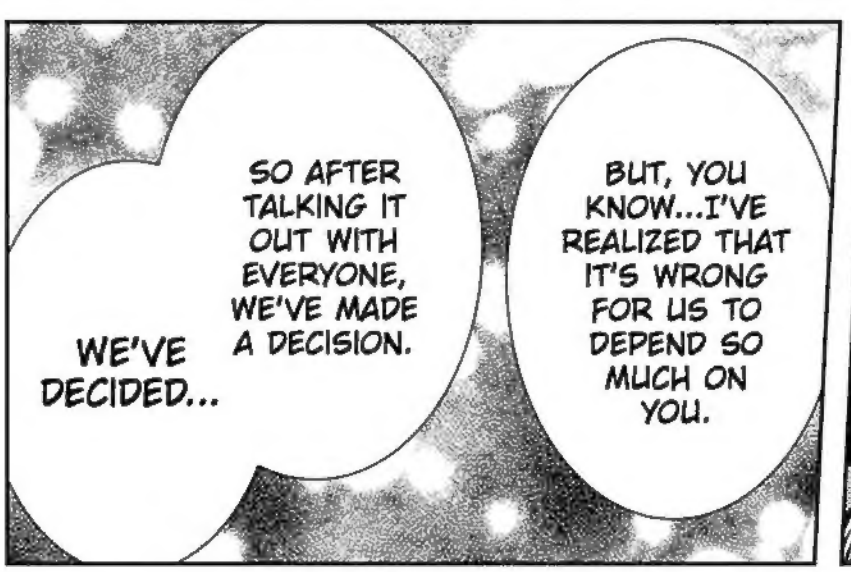
STORY: **NAGARU TANIGAWA** ART: **PUYO** CHARACTERS: NOIZI ITO

!?
PHOTOS

I DON'T REMEMBER ANY OF THIS!!!

WELL, OF COURSE! THESE ARE MY DREAMS YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!
WHIRRR
KYON IS ALWAYS AT THE CENTER OF EVERY-THING...

STOP MAKING THINGS UP!
LOOKING BACK, THERE'S SO MUCH THAT'S HAPPENED BETWEEN US...

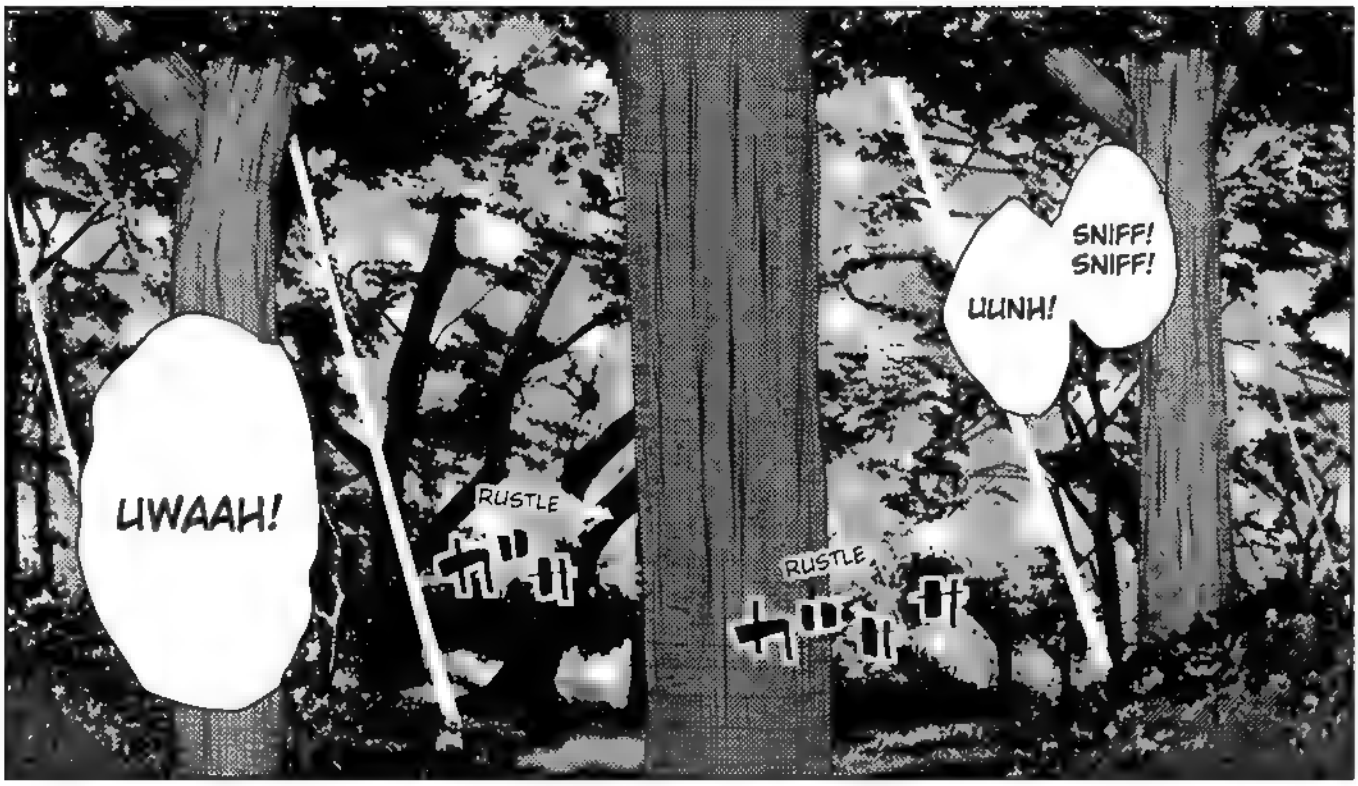

WE'VE DECIDED...
SO AFTER TALKING IT OUT WITH EVERYONE, WE'VE MADE A DECISION.
BUT, YOU KNOW...I'VE REALIZED THAT IT'S WRONG FOR US TO DEPEND SO MUCH ON YOU.

...THAT WE'RE GOING TO GRAD-UATE FROM YOUR DREAMS !!!

IF WE STAY IN ONE PLACE, HOW WILL WE EVER BE ABLE TO GROW!?
...WE NEED A MORE GLOBAL PERSPEC-TIVE!
I THINK THAT IN THIS DAY AND AGE...

BUT...
I KNOW THAT YOU WANT TO KEEP US HERE...
SO PLEASE UNDERSTAND, KYON.

...SWALLOW YOUR TEARS...
...AND SEND US OFF WITH A SMILE!
UM, YEAH. SEE YOU LATER.
HE SENT THEM OFF.

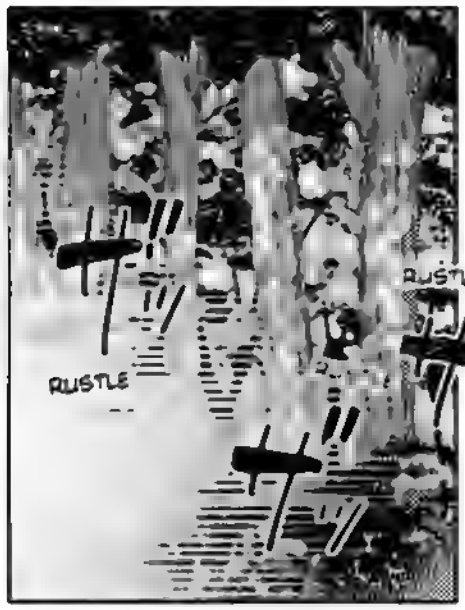

UWAAH!
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
UUNH!
SNIFF! SNIFF!

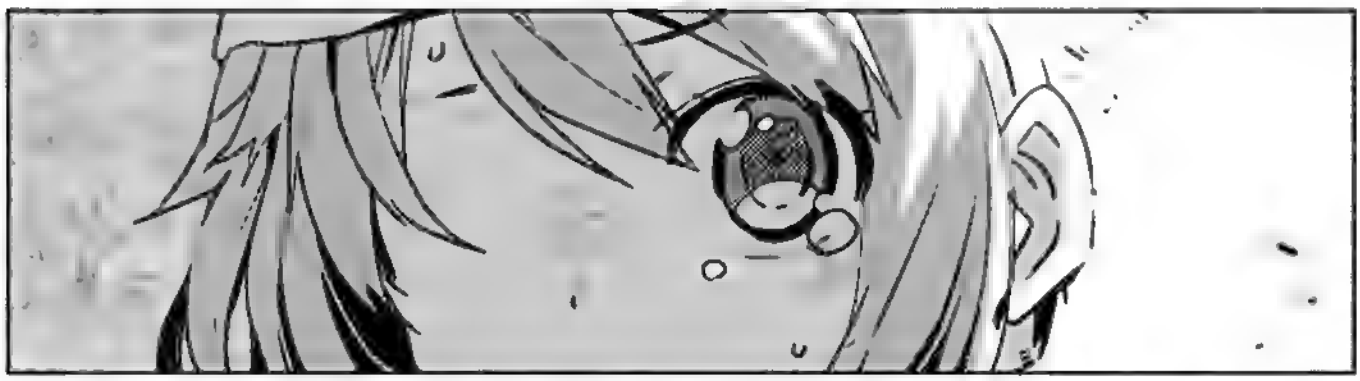
TWITCH
MIKURU-CHAN! MIKURU-CHAN!

WHERE AM I!?

ME? WELL I'M...
EEP...! WHO'S THERE!?

IT'S A WOLF !!!!
EEEEEEEEEK!!!
POP
I'M A—
.....
HUH...?
JUST LEAVE IT TO ME!
ROGER!
CLAMOR
SHE RAN THAT WAY.
CLAMOR
WAI— MIKURU-CHAN, JUST LISTEN!


RUSTLE
RUSTLE



EEEEEK!

I'M FINALLY RID OF THOSE GUYS.
NNNH!

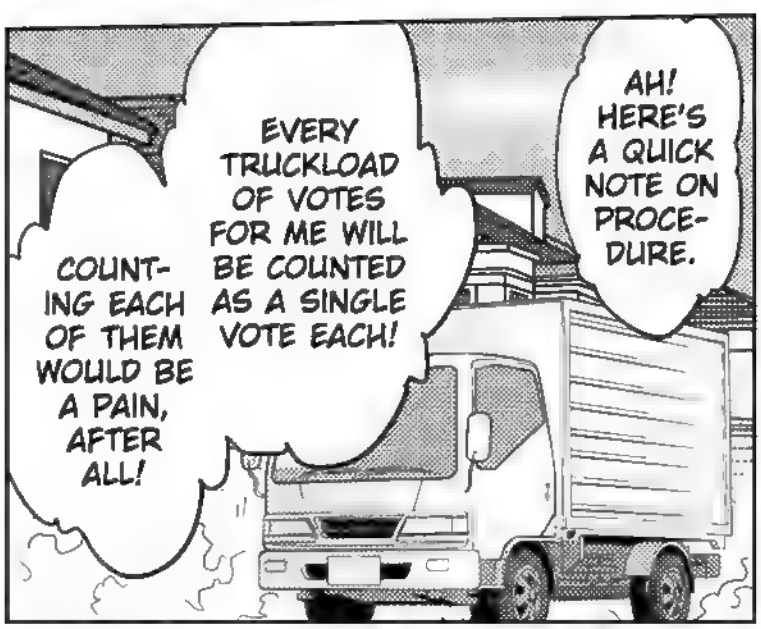
RIGHT?
IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE I'VE HAD SUCH A REFRESHING NEW-YEAR'S DREAM.
QUE SERA, SERA!

OH HEY, IT LOOKS LIKE KYON WOKE UP!
AH, YOU'RE RIGHT.
JUST HOW LONG WERE YOU PLANNING ON SLEEPING, YOU LAZY PAST-DWELLER?
—THIS IS... EGGPLANT.
HAPPY NEW YEAR.

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE SECOND HALF

ぽ
POP!
ぽん
POP!
ぽん

TODAY WE'RE GOING TO POST THE RESULTS OF THE POPULARITY CONTEST WE JUST HELD!!!
.....
EVERYONE! THANK YOU FOR SUP-PORTING THE SOS BRIGADE!


AH! HERE'S A QUICK NOTE ON PROCE-DURE.
EVERY TRUCKLOAD OF VOTES FOR ME WILL BE COUNTED AS A SINGLE VOTE EACH!
COUNT-ING EACH OF THEM WOULD BE A PAIN, AFTER ALL!

WE RECEIVED AN AS-TOUNDING 15,498 VOTES!
THIS PROVES THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SOS BRIGADE ARE WELL-KNOWN!
STACKED

HERE ARE THE RESULTS OF THE SOS BRIGADE POPU-LARITY CON-TEST!!!
ALL RIGHT! SO LET'S GO AHEAD POST THE RESULTS, SHALL WE?
BEAM!

WELL, CONSIDERING MY POPULARITY, THIS KIND OF HANDICAP IS NECESSARY, ISN'T IT!?

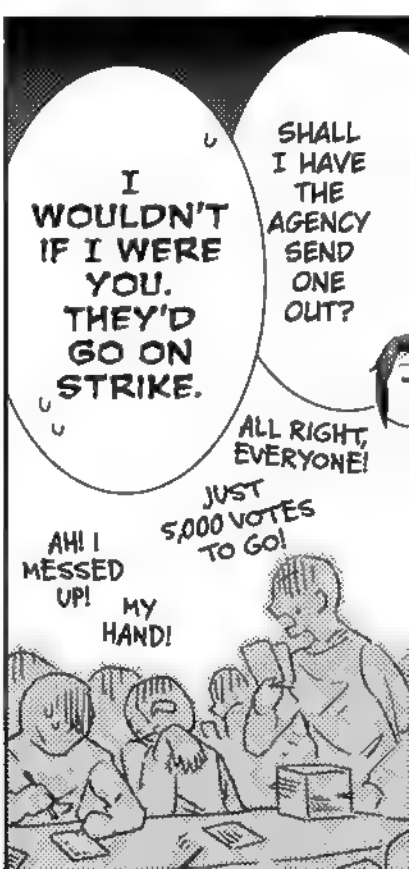
MUNCH
もっしゃ
MUNCH
もっしゃ
I'D LOVE TO DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
OR WHATEVER.
SIGN: BRIGADE CHIEF

OH, BE QUIET. I KNOW, I KNOW...
BOOO.
WHO EXACTLY DO YOU THINK IS GOING TO SEND IN A TRUCKLOAD OF VOTES?

...YOU DO KNOW THE NUMBER OF HITS OUR HOMEPAGE HAS, RIGHT?
WELL, YOU CAN DREAM ALL YOU WANT, BUT...

DON'T INFLATE THE NUMBERS, YOU'LL JUST FEEL EMPTY ABOUT IT LATER.
WELL, I KIND OF GET WHAT YOU'RE SAYING, BUT...!

JUST WHAT KIND OF INFLATION ARE YOU TRYING TO PULL!?
WHY NOT? IF YOU JUST COUNT EACH VOTE AS 1,000...
WE DID IT!
5 4 3 2 1
WE GOT 5,000 VOTES!


I WOULDN'T IF I WERE YOU. THEY'D GO ON STRIKE.
SHALL I HAVE THE AGENCY SEND ONE OUT?
ALL RIGHT, EVERYONE!
JUST 5,000 VOTES TO GO!
AH! I MESSED UP! MY HAND!

...LET'S FIGURE OUT WHO'S THE MOST POPULAR!
IN ORDER TO SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT THE SOS BRIGADE'S ACTIVITIES...
YEAH, I FIGURED.
THE SOS BRIGADE POPU-LARITY CONTEST!
MY MOTTO IS, WHEN YOU WANT TO DO SOMETHING, JUST DO IT! SO WE'RE DOING IT!
CLENCH
ばーん
TA-DAA!
Yuki Nagato
Haruhi Suzumiya
Mikuru Asahina
Kyon
Itsuki
Yasumi Watahashi
WITH THAT PURPOSE IN MIND, I MADE THIS!
HEY, DON'T JUST SNEAK IN A VOTE FOR YOURSELF.
WHAT'S WITH THAT PICTURE OF ME?
AH, LIKE THE KIND YOU SEE ON TV...
STICK
WE'LL HAVE THE VOTERS PUT STICKERS ON THE PHOTO-GRAPHS, WITH ONE STICKER COUNTING AS ONE VOTE.

WELL, I SUPPOSE IF YOU PUT IT THAT WAY...

D-DON'T SAY IT LIKE I WAS CHEATING! EVERYONE HAS ONE VOTE, OKAY?
PUTTING IN A VOTE FOR YOURSELF IS A PERFECTLY LEGITIMATE STRATEGY!

GO RIGHT AHEAD!
OKAY, THEN I GUESS I'LL VOTE FOR MYSELF TOO...

STICK

COME ON, EVERY-ONE, PLACE YOUR VOTES!

STICK
STICK

STICK

STICK
GEH.
Haruhi Suzumiya

I-I DON'T NEED THIS KIND OF FLATTERY!
STOP IT, OKAY!?

E-EVERY-ONE...!
TWINGE

もじ
FIDGET
もじ
FIDGET
I, UMM... WELL...
E-EVERY-ONE...
WH-WHAT'S WITH THESE RESULTS? IT'S AS IF I'VE BEEN LEFT OUT OF THE LOOP OF WHAT'S GOING ON...
TWITCH
ひく
LIKE I'M THE ONLY ONE THAT'S GOING ALL OUT TRYING TO WIN...
CHIEF! CHIEF!
I'M SO GLAD I'M EVERY-ONE'S BRIGADE CHIEF!
THANK YOU!

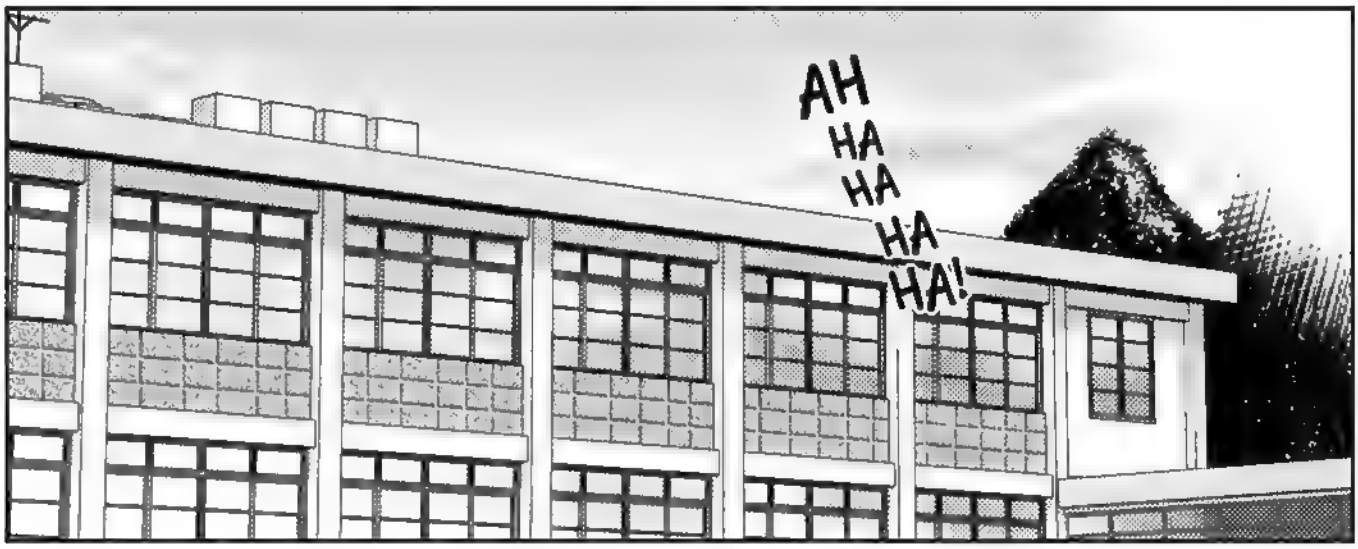
YOU KNOW...
HMM...
Mikuru Asahina
Haruhi Suzumiya
Yasumi Watanabe
Itsuki
FWIP
I WAS THINKING ABOUT ASKING FOR VOTES FROM OUTSIDE THE BRIGADE, BUT I'M NOT SURE THAT'S NECESSARY ANYMORE.
HA-HA... THIS MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE REAL NUMBER OF VOTES I WANTED AFTER ALL.
WHOOSH
THE BOARD!
WHA ...!?
POOF

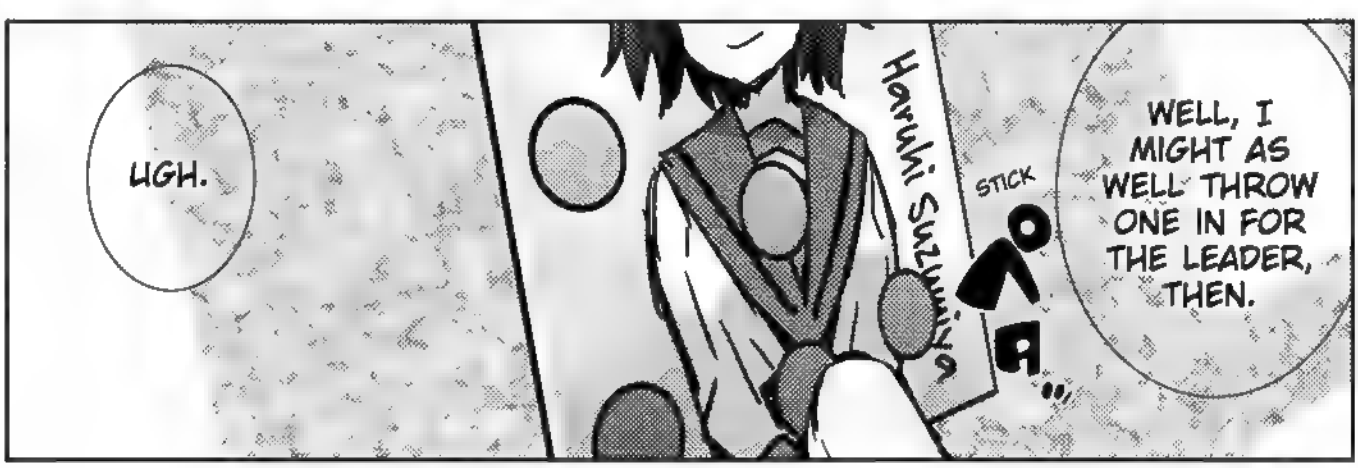
HA! THIS BOARD IS MINE!
TURN
KYON ...!
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING!?
TENSE
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, KYON!? GIVE THAT BOARD BACK!
YOU WOULDN'T ...!
I'M SORRY, HARUHI...
GRIP
THIS BOARD'S... A BIT OF A PROBLEM FOR ME, YOU SEE...

YES! I'M GOING TO GO AROUND GATHERING VOTES...
...AND TURN THIS UNFORTUNATE RESULT AROUND!
DASH
A!!!
WHAT AN UNDERHANDED SCHEME!
THUS, DUE TO KYON'S PLOT...
COME BACK HERE, YOU IDIOT!
...DARK CLOUDS BEGAN TO FORM OVER THE SOS BRIGADE POPULARITY CONTEST.

BAG: POTATO CHIPS

THAT SOUNDS GOOD TO ME.
LET'S EAT SOME SNACKS WHILE WE WAIT FOR HIM TO GET BACK.
WELL, IF KYON REALLY WANTS TO GO GATHER VOTES ALL BY HIMSELF, THAT MEANS WE CAN TAKE IT EASY.





• Mikuru Asahina • Vote received from the Pervert Demographic: 1 vote total

• Haruhi Suzumiya • Votes received from strong preexisting support base: 6 votes total

A POPULARITY CONTEST, HUH...
NORMALLY I'D SAY WE SHOULD VOTE FOR SUZUMIYA-SAN, BUT I SUPPOSE THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH VOTING FOR ONE'S OWN, DON'T YOU THINK?
MORI
AGREED.
KOIZUMI +2
THAT KOIZUMI AND HIS AGENCY VOTES...

• Itsuki Koizumi • Votes received from the Agency: 2 votes total

A POPULARITY CONTEST, HUH? YOU GUYS SURE DO SOME INTERESTING THINGS.
ヒヨコ0%
PWOP
YOU'RE GOING TO VOTE FOR ASAHINA-SAN, AREN'T YOU?
YEP, PUT ME IN FOR MIKURU.
OH, AND ALSO...
...HOW MANY MEMBERS DOES THE MIKURU FAN CLUB HAVE AGAIN...?
EH!?
WE HAD THE FAN CLUB COL-LECTIVELY COUNT AS ONE VOTE.

• Mikuru Asahina • Two votes received from reliable voters: 3 votes total

TEAM SASAKI
WELL, I GUESS I'LL VOTE FOR KOIZUMI-SAN BECAUSE HE'S ALWAYS HELPING ME OUT...
I THINK I'LL VOTE FOR KYON, THEN.
YES! I BELIEVED IN YOU, SASAKI!
HMPH. YOU SURE CALLED US OUT FOR A DUMB REASON. IT'S BECAUSE OF THINGS THAT LIKE THIS, I CAN'T HANDLE BRATS LIKE YOU...
YEAH, ALL RIGHT. SORRY ABOUT THAT.
WELL THEN, I'LL BE SEEING YA.
W-WAIT!!!
IF YOU INSIST, I'LL PLAY ALONG! MIKURU ASAHINA! I VOTE FOR MIKURU ASAHINA!
YEAH, YEAH, I KNOW.

•Itsuki Koizumi •As might be expected given his connections: 3 votes total

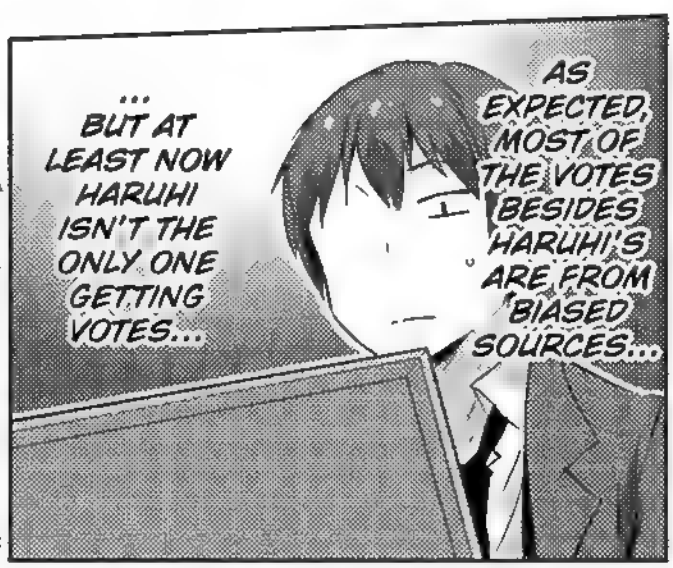
•Kyon •Finally receives a vote: 2 votes total

•Mikuru Asahina •Vote received from stalker (unconfirmed): 4 votes total

VISITING THE NAGATO FAMILY
HUH? A POPU-LARITY CONTEST?
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING, TRYING TO GET VOTES OUT OF SOMEONE WHO'S TRYING TO KILL YOU?

I DON'T HAVE TIME TO HANG AROUND AND DEAL WITH YOU.
PLUS, I'M ABOUT TO GO BUY GROCERIES FOR DINNER.
I'M SORRY. TERRIBLY SORRY.
JUST LIKE A HOUSE-WIFE CHASING AWAY A SALES-MAN.

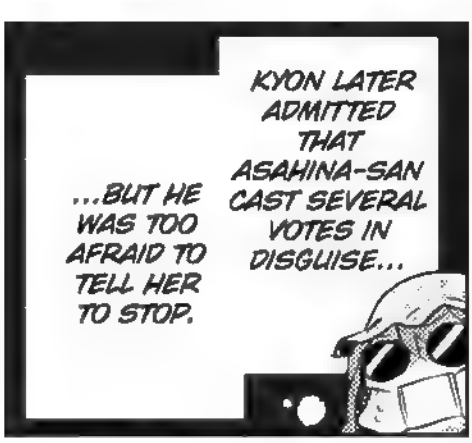
UM... BY THE WAY...
...HOW MANY VOTES DOES NAGATO HAVE?
HUH? NAGATO? SHE HAS ZERO VOTES.
.....


AS EXPECTED, MOST OF THE VOTES BESIDES HARUHI'S ARE FROM BIASED SOURCES...
... BUT AT LEAST NOW HARUHI ISN'T THE ONLY ONE GETTING VOTES...

•Yuki Nagato •Four votes collected around her neighborhood in one fell swoop: 4 votes total

KYON-KUN?
IF YOU WOULD JUST GET THE STICKER I'VE PUT ON SHAMISEN'S CLAWS, AND—
HEY, YOU SEE MY PICTURE HERE, RIGHT?

TOLD OFF BY MY LITTLE SISTER
OOF.
HUH? UH... UMM... MAYBE I SHOULDN'T ...?
ARE YOU REALLY OKAY WITH WINNING LIKE THIS?
UMM...


KYON LATER ADMITTED THAT ASAHINA-SAN CAST SEVERAL VOTES IN DISGUISE...
...BUT HE WAS TOO AFRAID TO TELL HER TO STOP.

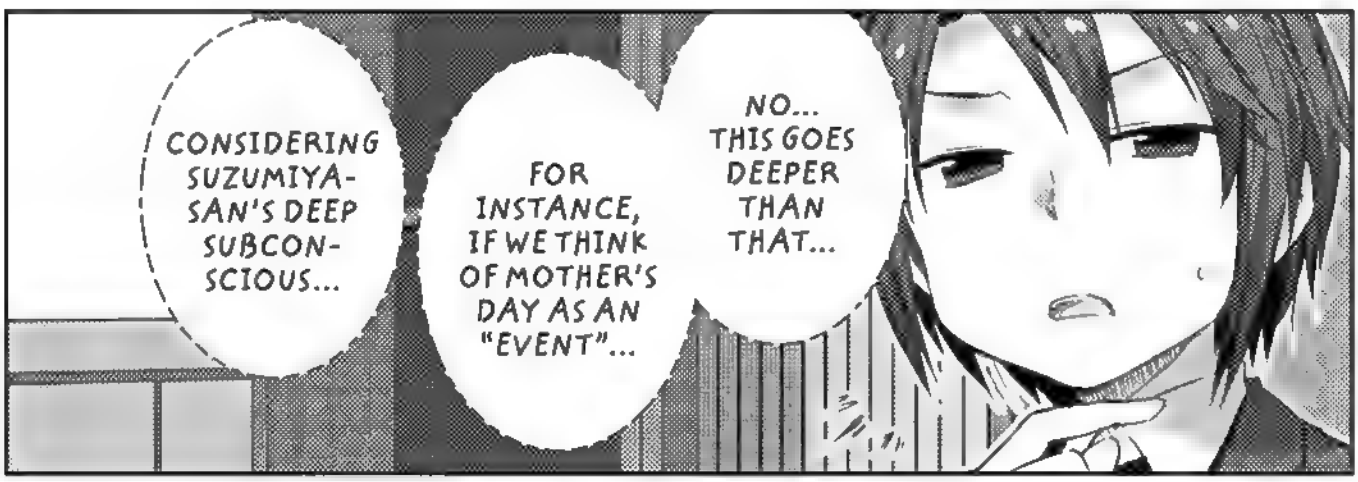
BY THE WAY...
Yasumi Watahashi
THE ONE WHO WON THE POPU-LARITY CONTEST ...
...WAS YASUMI, WHO FOR SOME REA-SON TOOK IN A LOT OF VOTES FROM THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

JUST FOUR MORE TIMES...

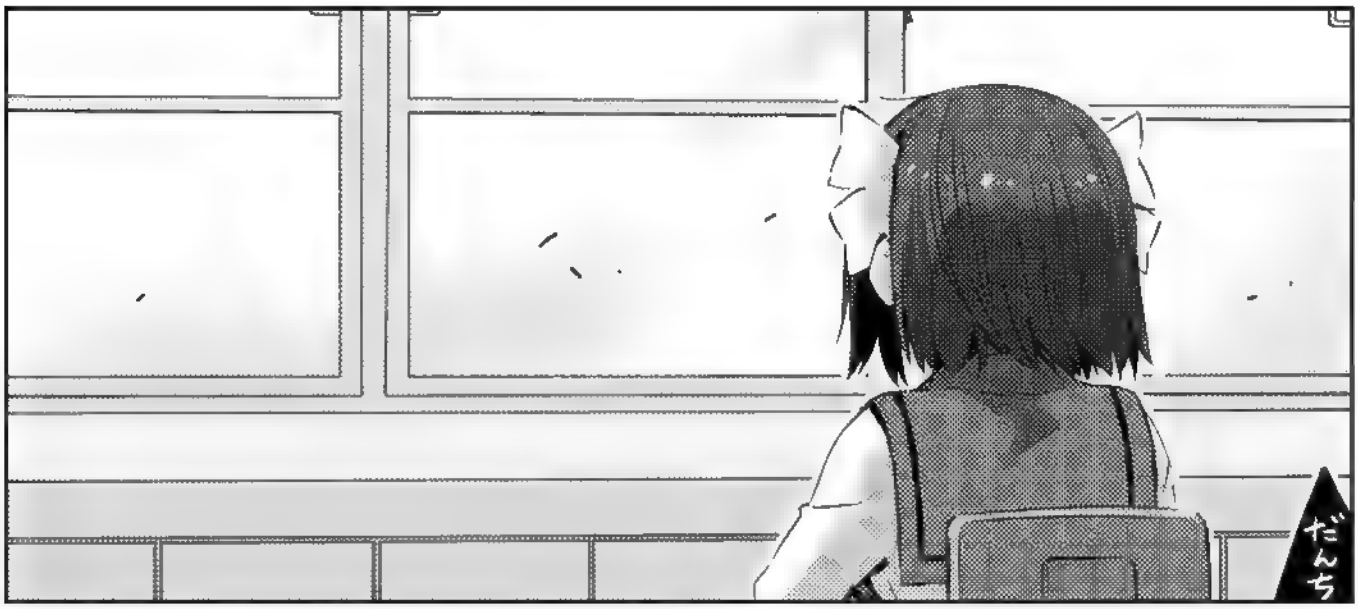
May

SIGN: BRIGADE CHIEF

*SOS BRIGADE EMERGENCY MEETING


CONSIDERING SUZUMIYA-SAN'S DEEP SUBCON-SCIOUS...
FOR INSTANCE, IF WE THINK OF MOTHER'S DAY AS AN "EVENT"...
NO... THIS GOES DEEPER THAN THAT...

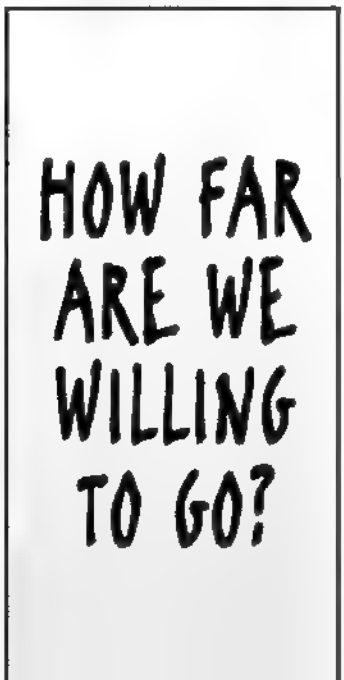
SHE'S BASICALLY DEMANDING WE DO SOMETHING!
...TODAY IS ONLY THREE DAYS BEFORE MOTHER'S DAY, WHICH GIVES US THE PERFECT AMOUNT OF TIME TO PREPARE!
AFTER ALL...
WHEN YOU PUT IT THAT WAY, IT MAKES SENSE THAT SHE TOLD US TODAY...
THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH NOT CELEBRATING IT. IN FACT IGNORING HER NOW WOULD PROBABLY BE FOR HER OWN GOOD.
IT'S TRUE THAT WE HADN'T EVEN CONSIDERED CELEBRATING THE HOLIDAY. YOU REALLY HAVE TO HAND IT TO OUR SUZUMIYA-SAN...
BUT, MOTHER'S DAY, HUH...
I GET THE FEELING THAT TIME WAS MORE A CASE OF YOU JUST RAISING THE BAR ON YOUR OWN.
IT'S NOT LIKE WE CAN ALWAYS PULL OFF SOMETHING BIG LIKE STAGING A MURDER INCIDENT IN A WESTERN MANSION ON AN ISOLATED ISLAND, AFTER ALL.
WHEN SHE'S SO CLEAR ABOUT WHAT SHE WANTS, DOESN'T THAT MAKE IT EASIER ON US?
HA-HA. IT'S NOT SO BAD.


だんち

OOOH!
CLAP
パチパチ
CLAP

SO WITH THAT, LET'S FORMALLY BEGIN OUR MOTHER'S DAY STRATEGY MEETING.
STRATEGIC AGENDA

SHOULD WE JUST GIVE HER A PRESENT, OR SHOULD WE THROW HER A BIT OF A PARTY?
HOW FAR ARE WE WILLING TO GO?


HOW FAR ARE WE WILLING TO GO?

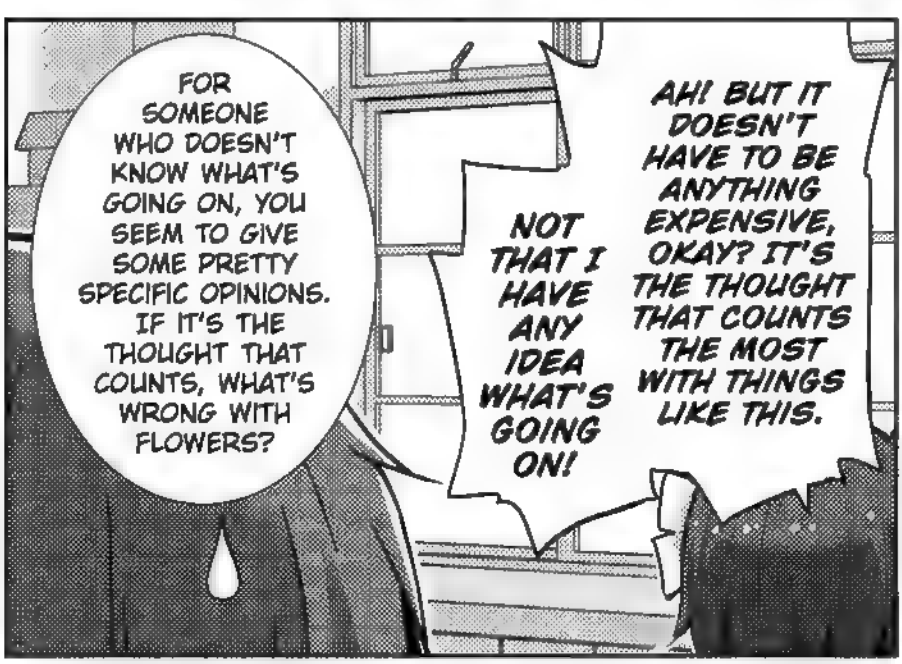
FLIP
ANYWAY, WHAT WE SHOULD DECIDE FIRST OF ALL IS...
TO GO?

THAT'S A VERY GOOD POINT.
THAT'S TRUE.
...WE'LL ONLY HAVE TIME TO PREPARE THE DAY OF OR THE NIGHT BEFORE.
IF WE END UP THROWING HER A SURPRISE PARTY, THEN...
CASUALLY!?
...IF YOU HAD TO CHOOSE BETWEEN A SURPRISE PARTY OR A PARTY YOU KNEW ABOUT BEFOREHAND, WHICH WOULD YOU PREFER?
HEY, HARUHI. I WAS JUST WONDERING, BUT...
ALL RIGHT, I GUESS I'LL CASUALLY ASK WHAT SHE WANTS.
AFTER THIS, EVERYONE RESUMED TALKING IN THEIR NORMAL VOICES.
...I'D WANT A SUR-PRISE PARTY!!
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU MIGHT BE REFERRING TO...BUT IF I HAD TO CHOOSE...
HMM...

AH, A CARNATION, RIGHT?
BASICALLY, DO YOU THINK WE COULD GET AWAY WITH GIVING HER THE USUAL MOTHER'S DAY THING?

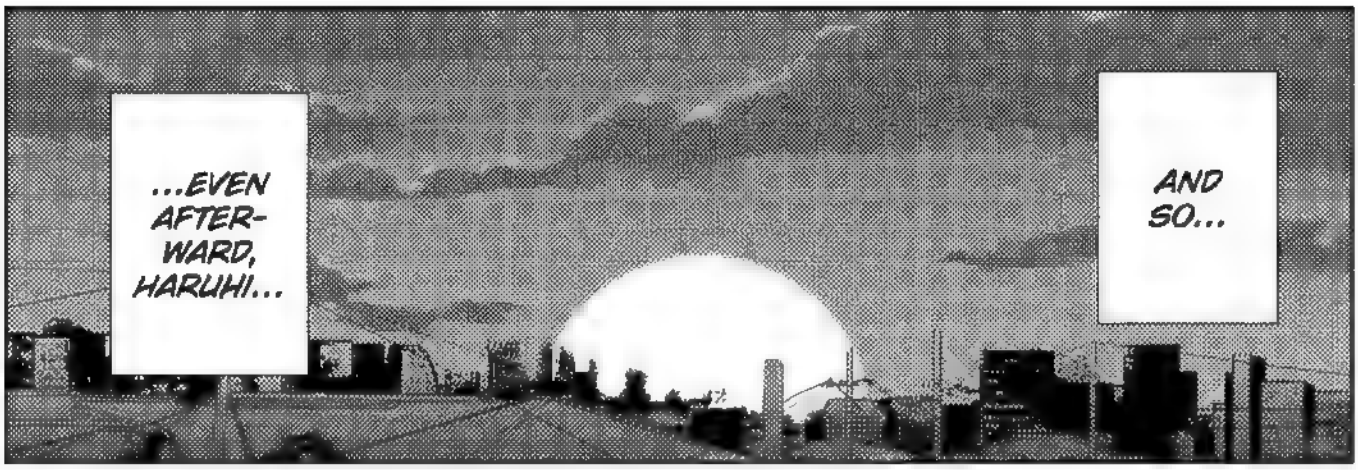
ALL RIGHT, NEXT.
PRESENT SELECTION

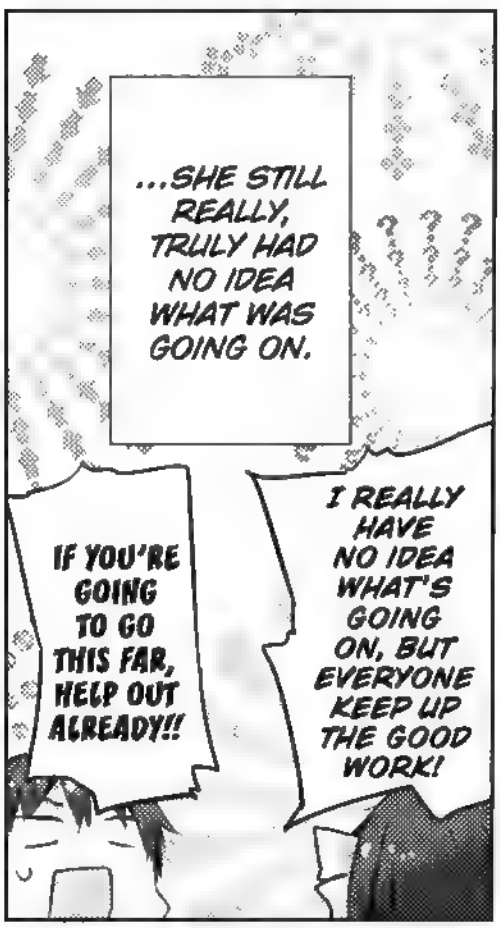
FLASH
WHY WOULD I WANT SOME-THING LIKE THAT!?
WHAT DO YOU THINK, HARUHI?
*HARUHI'S PERSONAL OPINION


FOR SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON, YOU SEEM TO GIVE SOME PRETTY SPECIFIC OPINIONS. IF IT'S THE THOUGHT THAT COUNTS, WHAT'S WRONG WITH FLOWERS?
NOT THAT I HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT'S GOING ON!
AH! BUT IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE ANYTHING EXPENSIVE, OKAY? IT'S THE THOUGHT THAT COUNTS THE MOST WITH THINGS LIKE THIS.

WELL, IT'S NOT LIKE WE'RE HER CHILDREN, AFTER ALL.
THAT SETTLES THAT.

IF YOU CAN'T PUT EVEN A LITTLE THOUGHT INTO GETTING A GIFT THAT REFLECTS YOUR FEELINGS...
ARE WE REALLY EXPECTED TO HAVE FEELINGS FOR OUR SOS BRIGADE "MOTHER"!?
YOU DON'T GET IT, DO YOU? SENDING A CARNATION JUST BECAUSE IT'S WHAT EVERYONE DOES...
IF YOU DO THAT, YOU'RE NOT REALLY PUTTING ANY THOUGHT INTO IT AT ALL!
ZSH
NOT THAT I HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT'S GOING ON.
SHFF
THIS IS GETTING KIND OF ANNOYING... SHOULD WE GIVE UP ON THE WHOLE "SURPRISE" ANGLE?
.....


...EVEN AFTER-WARD, HARUHI...
AND SO...


...SHE STILL REALLY, TRULY HAD NO IDEA WHAT WAS GOING ON.
I REALLY HAVE NO IDEA WHAT'S GOING ON, BUT EVERYONE KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!
IF YOU'RE GOING TO GO THIS FAR, HELP OUT ALREADY!!

...AND TO THE VERY END...
WHERE SHOULD I PUT THIS?
HMM... LET'S SEE.

...CONTINUED TO DIRECT PREPARATIONS FOR THE SURPRISE PARTY...
O-OKAY! I'LL BE RIGHT BACK!
MIKURU-CHAN! MOTHER'S DAY IS ON SUNDAY, SO WE CAN'T USE THE CLUBROOM.
GO ASK TSURUYA-SAN TO ARRANGE A PARTY VENUE!

SO ON THE DAY OF THE EVENT...
TROT ぱたぱた
TROT ぱたぱた
EVERYONE! SUZUMIYA-SAN'S HERE!
OKAY, EVERYONE'S READY, RIGHT?

SLIDE
スル
ONE, TWO, AND...!
WHAT ARE YOU UP TO, CALLING ME OUT TO A PLACE LIKE THIS?
EEP!
(SOS BRIGADE) MOTHER!
THANK YOU FOR EVERY-THING!!!
POP
IT WAS A COMPLETE FARCE.
REALLY, EVERY-ONE!!
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO DO THIS FOR ME!
OH, YOU GUYS!

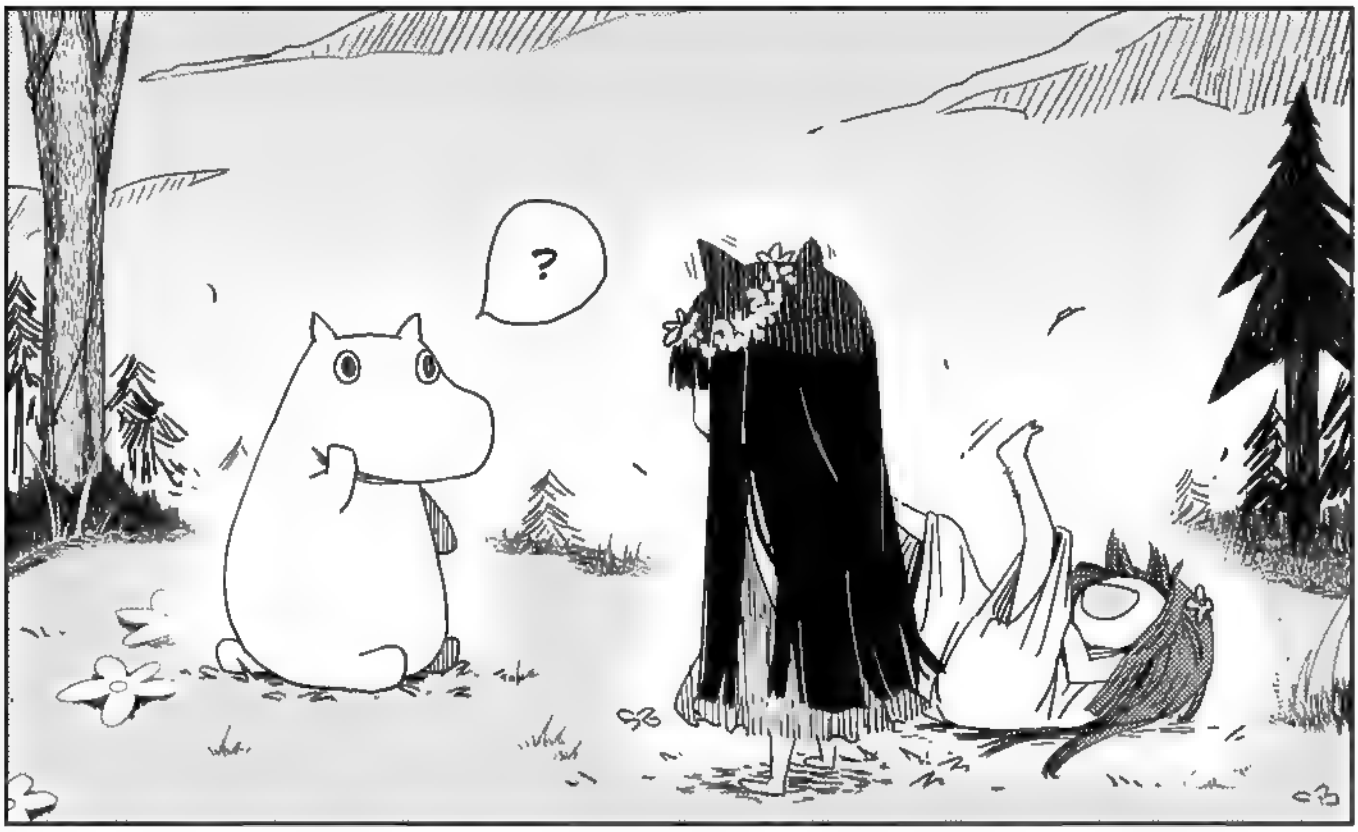
AFTER-WARD
...AH!

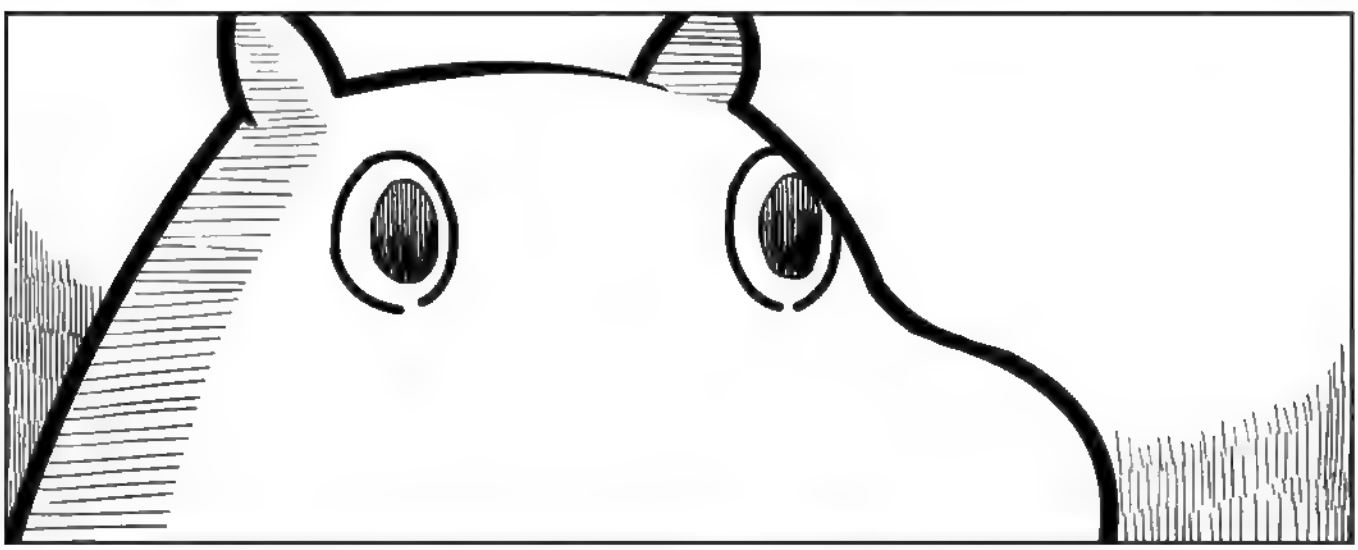
HEY, KYON. WHY DON'T WE FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF NATIONAL FOUNDATION DAY AND HAVE FOUNDATION OF THE SOS BRIGADE DAY?
HEH-HEH-HEH!
REJECT-ED.
YOU REALLY SHOULD STOP MAKING UP SO MANY EVENTS. YOU'LL WEAR US OUT.

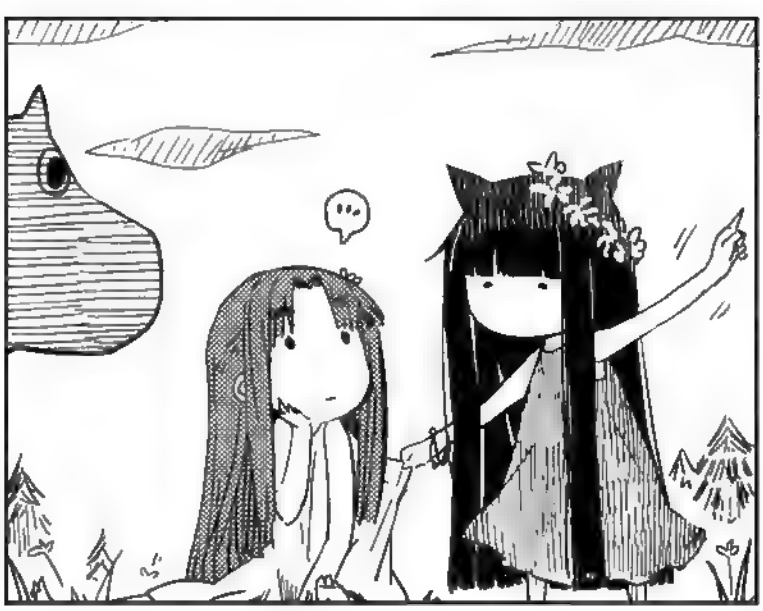
HEY, THEN INSTEAD OF THE BON FESTIVAL HOW ABOUT DOING A BRIGADE FESTIVAL?
WHAT WOULD WE BE CELE-BRATING!?
THE RETURN OF SUZUMIYA-SAN.
THEN YOU HAVE TO LEAVE FIRST!
THEN HOW ABOUT A COMMEMORATION OF THE OPENING OF THE SOS BRIGADE? THE SLOGAN CAN BE, "THE NEW SOS BRIGADE HAS ARRIVED!"
WHAT ARE WE, BEAUJOLAIS NOUVEAU!?

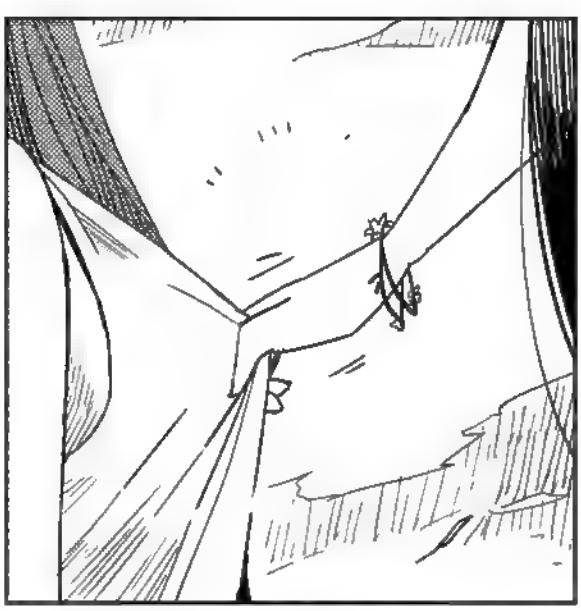
?
I HAVE THE FEELING SHE'S FORGETTING A REALLY IMPORTANT EVENT.

ASAKURA-SAN GOES HIKING
...
?



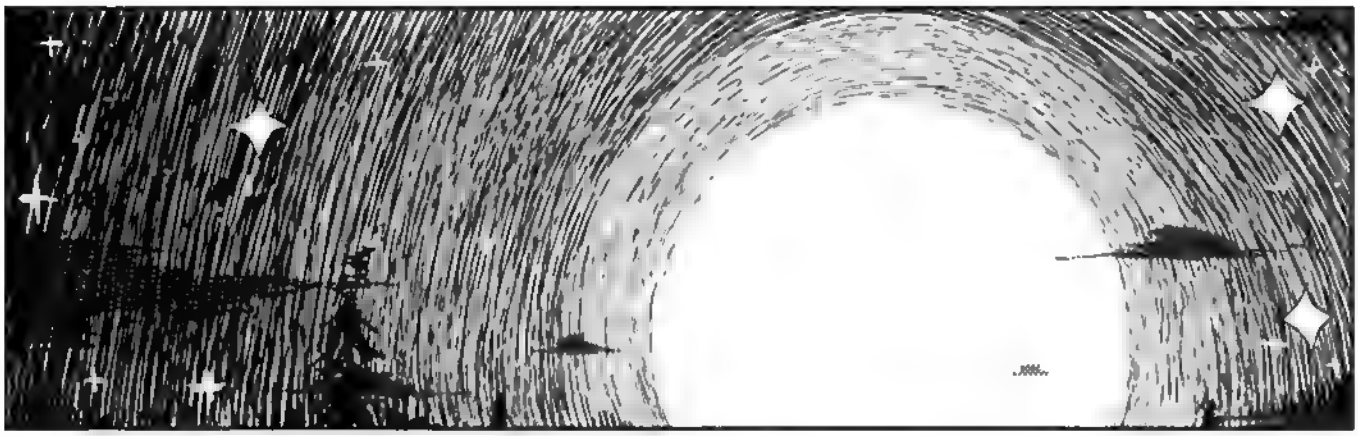


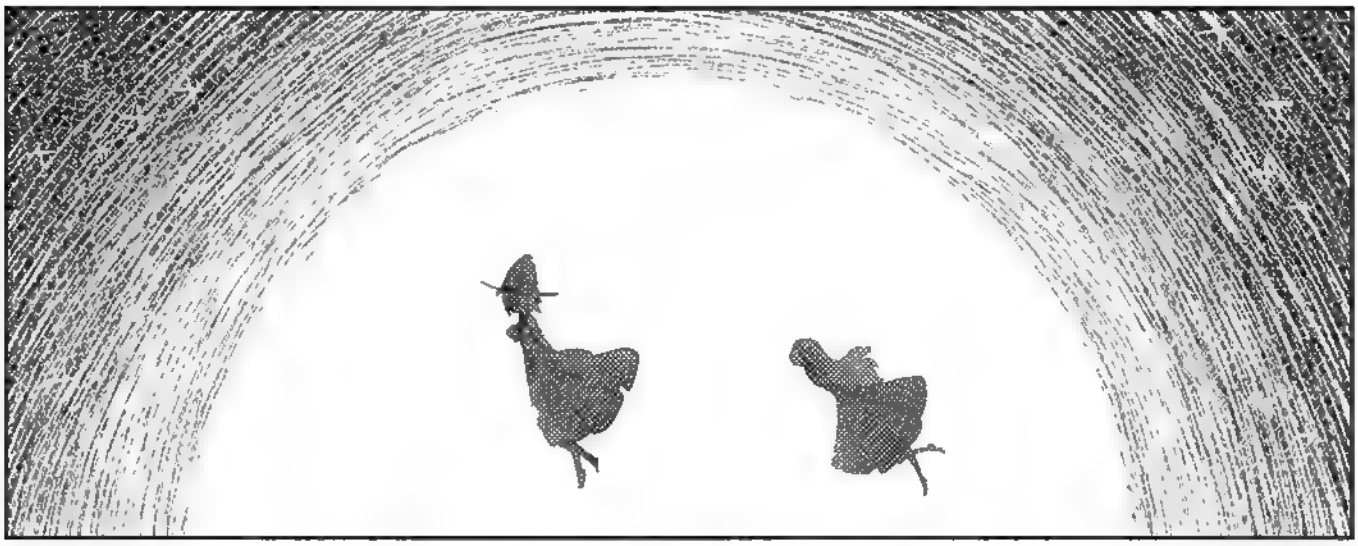


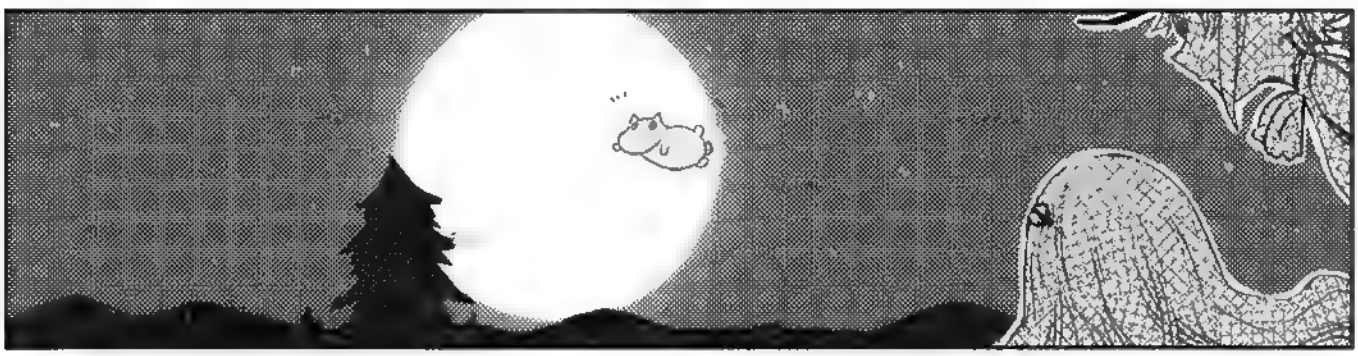


RIVER
IT'S ALMOST
DUSK
!

17







GOSH, IT WAS A STRANGE VALLEY, WASN'T IT!?

IT'S PER-
MANENT
MARKER!

SUMMER
VACATION!

DUN-DUH-DUN!
TOO
YOUKAI KING
You brat! Don't think you can become the Youkai King so easily!!
I will become the Youkai King!!!
WHAAAT!?
WHAT!?
Son, you are not my true son.
You are a mere human!
Once you have done that, you will cease to be human and become a youkai. Then you may become the Youkai Kin—
THIS LOOKS LIKE SOMETHING HARUHI'D ENJOY.
Listen to me. If you want to become the Youkai King, you will have to take the head of the current king.

ド
BABAM
I WILL BECOME THE YOUKAI KING!

BUZZ
BUZZ
BUZZ
SUMMER VACA-TION
WHISPER
WHISPER
IT'S NOT LIKE THE HEAT HAS GONE TO MY HEAD OR ANY-THING!!
H-HEY, YOU GUYS! SAY SOME-THING!!
HEY, ARE YOU LISTEN-ING TO ME?
EMER-GENCY MEETING
RIGHT NOW, IT'S STILL NOT TOO LATE TO...
EVERYONE, CALM DOWN. LET'S LISTEN TO WHAT SHE HAS TO SAY FIRST AND MAKE A DECISION AFTER THAT...
EEP!
HEY, DOESN'T THIS MEAN YOUKA! ARE GOING TO START SHOWING UP?

WH-WHAT!?
HARUHI!
...DON'T DO ANY-THING RASH.
WE'LL LISTEN CAREFULLY TO WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY SO, UH...
ガバッ
CRACKLE
DON'T WORRY! I'M ALL RIGHT! I'M REALLY ALL RIGHT, OKAY!?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN!?
ANXIOUS
H-HANG ON— W-WAIT! EVERY-ONE, I'M TOTALLY FINE. COM-PLETELY CHILL.
I AGREE... LET'S GO TO THE CAFÉ WE ALWAYS GO TO.
WELL, FOR THE TIME BEING, LET'S GET HER TO COOL DOWN.

SIGN: CAFÉ DREAM

WELL, IT'S BECAUSE I WANT TO PLAY WITH YOUKAI? I GUESS...
SO ABOUT THESE YOUKAI YOU WANT TO PLAY WITH...
ARE THEY THE TYPE THAT EAT HUMANS?
EAT— IS THAT REALLY IMPORT-ANT!?
VERY IMPORTANT.
VERY.
V-VERY...
MM.
YEP, VERY.
EVERY-ONE'S IN SYNC!!
O-OF COURSE NOT THE KIND THAT EAT PEOPLE!
I DON'T WANT TO PLAY WITH THEM SO MUCH THAT I'D RISK GETTING EATEN, OKAY?
THAT'S GOOD TO HEAR.
ALL RIGHT, KOIZUMI...
YES.

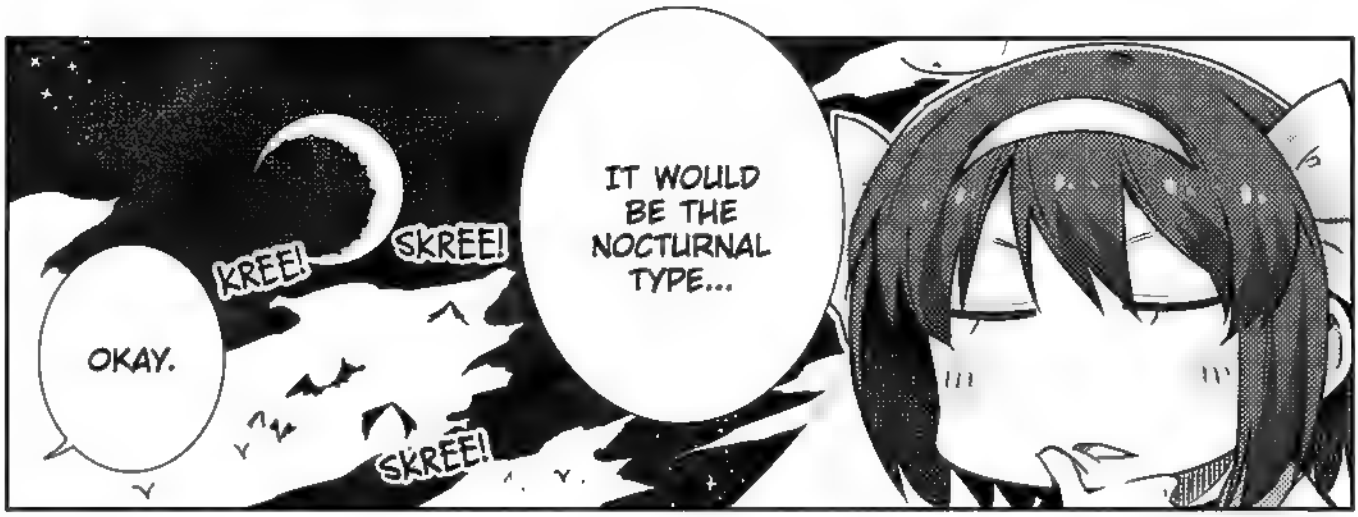
WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO SIGN THIS FORM.
SIGN!?

THIS IS ONE OF THOSE CARBON THINGS I HEARD YOU WRITE ON WHEN YOU SIGN A CONTRACT!
THE SECOND FORM IS FOR YOU TO KEEP...
...SO PLEASE STORE IT IN A SAFE PLACE.
Y FRIENDS JILL NOT EAT PEOPLE —HARUHI SUZ

YOU SEEM LIKE YOU WOULD BE THE PRIMARY TARGET FOR EITHER OF THOSE, ASAHINA-SENPAI.
I'M ALSO AFRAID OF GETTING SPOOKED!
HMM... I SUPPOSE... KIDNAPPING?
IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE WE HAVE TO ACCOUNT FOR?

IF YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE ME SIGN ANYTHING ELSE, COULD YOU GET EVERYTHING TOGETHER FIRST, PLEASE?
YEAH...
MAYBE THEIR OUT-WARD APPEAR-ANCE...?
I WAS ONLY JOKING.
EEEE!

JUST HOW MANY OF THESE THINGS ARE YOU GOING TO MAKE ME SIGN? GEEZ.
TAP
TAP
WELL, I SUPPOSE THIS SHOULD DO IT.
YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW HOW TO TAKE A JOKE, DO YOU?
HYEH HEH...
HYEH HEH...
WE'RE THE ONES WHO'RE GOING TO SUFFER IF YOU END UP BECOMING THE YOUKAI KING.
HUH? THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT TO ASK?
SO WHAT KIND OF YOUKAI DO YOU WANT TO PLAY WITH WHEN YOU BECOME THE YOUKAI KING?
HMM... WELL...
?
WELL, WHENEVER YOU SAY YOU WANT TO PLAY WITH SOMETHING OR SOMEONE, THEY END UP BECOMING A CANDIDATE FOR SOS BRIGADE MEMBERSHIP...


KREE!
SKREE!
SKREE!
OKAY.
IT WOULD BE THE NOCTURNAL TYPE...

IF YOU SAY "VAMPIRE," YOU'RE ALREADY INTO THE "EATS HUMANS" CATEGORY— ARE YOU OKAY WITH THAT?
SIZZLE
...THAT WOULD BURN UP IN SUNLIGHT...

WHA...?
RUMBLE
LIKE, AS BIG AS A BUILDING, MAYBE?
ANYWAY, IT'D BE HUGE.

.....
FWOOP
THAT WAY I COULD RIDE ON ITS SHOULDER.

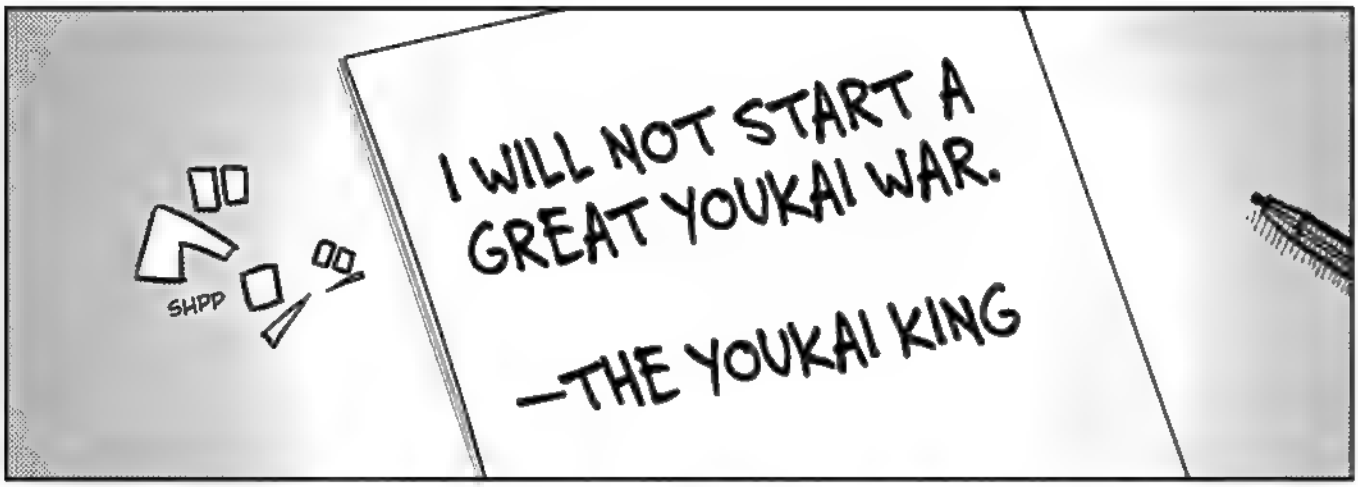
NOTE: "DEIDARABOCCHI" (ALSO "DAIDARABOCCHI") IS AN ENORMOUS YOUKAI (MONSTER) FROM JAPANESE FOLKLORE.

PLOT DEVICES EXPLODING IN HER MIND
...BUT THE HUMANS WOULD STILL FIND A WAY TO RESIST. THEY'D RAISE THE JAPANESE FLAG, WHICH IS MODELED AFTER THE SUN...
NO HUMAN WOULD BE ABLE TO STAND BEFORE THE DESTRUCTIVE MIGHT OF THE YOUKAI...

REALLY?
フス STEAM
フス STEAM
HARUHI, THAT'S ENOUGH. I'M NOT SURE KOIZUMI CAN TAKE ANY MORE.

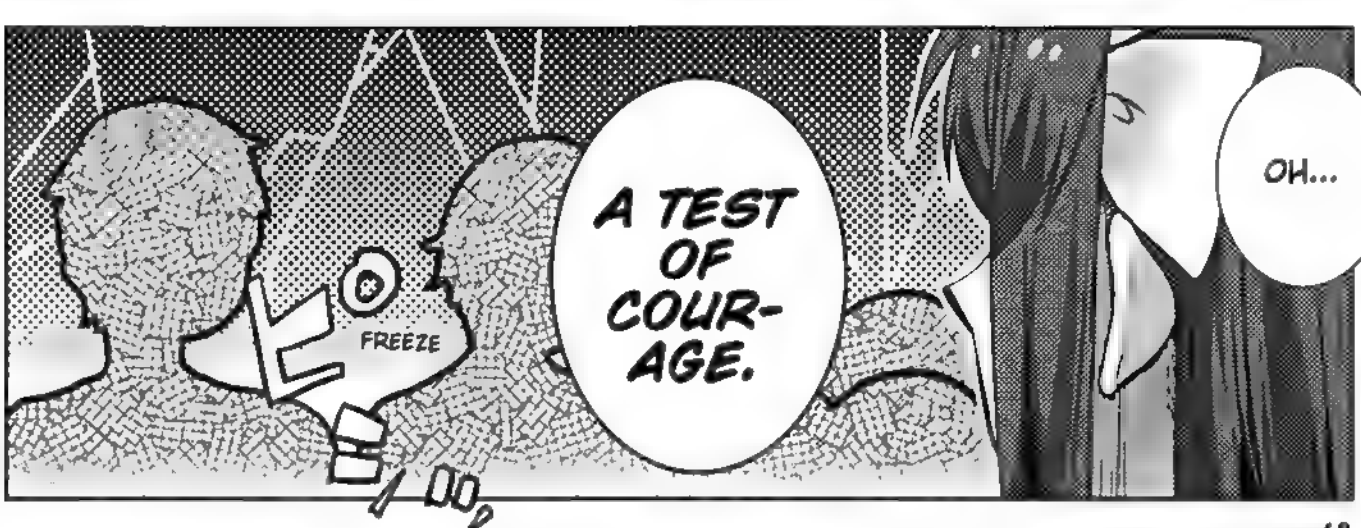
"RED PEOPLE"... "GREAT WAR"!?
"THE GREAT YOUKAI WAR" ARC.
I WAS JUST ABOUT TO GET TO THE PART WHERE THE RED PEOPLE AND THE YOUKAI KING HAVE THIS HUGE BATTLE...

KOIZUMI, CALM DOWN! IT'S ALL RIGHT! DON'T READ INTO IT TOO MUCH!
IF THIS IS A FORETELLING OF THE FINAL BATTLE OUR AGENCY MUST FACE AGAINST THE CELESTIALS, WHAT SHOULD I DO...!?


I WILL NOT START A GREAT YOUKAI WAR.
—THE YOUKAI KING
SHPP

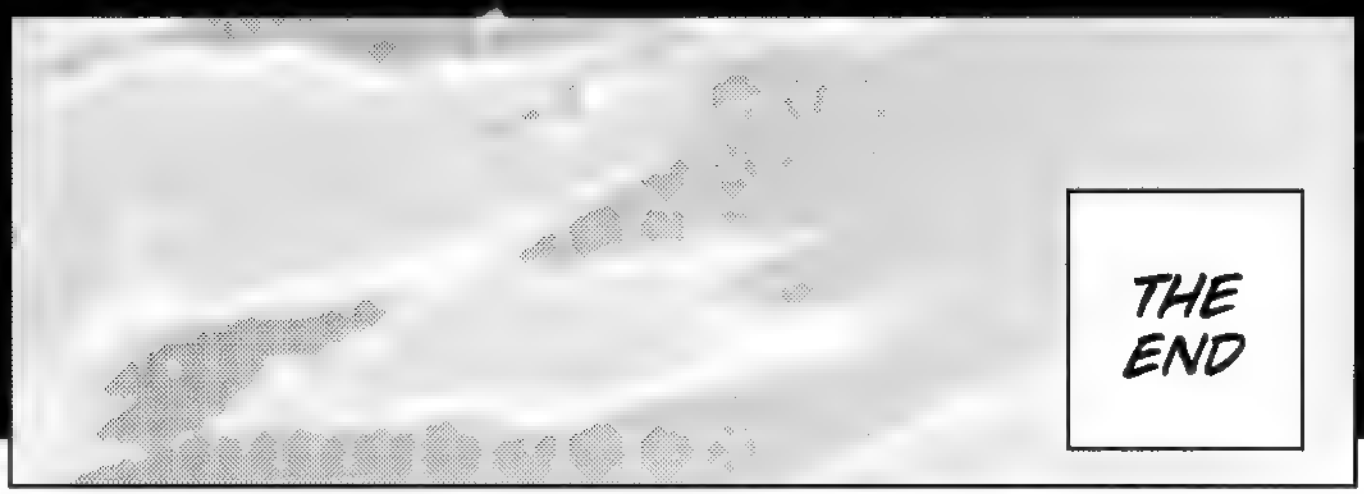
ALL RIGHT...
...REALLY FOR THE BEST?
WAS THIS...

HMM?
HARUHI, WHAT WAS IT THAT YOU REALLY WANTED TO DO TODAY?
WE'VE FINISHED UP HERE, SO LET'S MOVE ON.


FREEZE
A TEST OF COUR-AGE.
OH...

SEE, THERE'S THIS CAVE IN ONE OF THE MOUNTAINS BEHIND TSURUYA-SAN'S HOUSE...
...AND IT'S CALLED "THE YOUKAI CELLAR."
WHEN I SAID I WAS GOING TO BECOME THE YOUKAI KING, I WAS GOING TO USE THAT AS A LEAD-IN TO TALK ABOUT THE CAVE.
BUT, WELL, WE GOT SORT OF SIDE-TRACKED...
ANYWAY, IT LOOKS LIKE EVERYONE'S INTERESTED IN YOUKAI...
...SO THIS IS JUST PERFECT.
WELL, THEN!
LET'S GO!

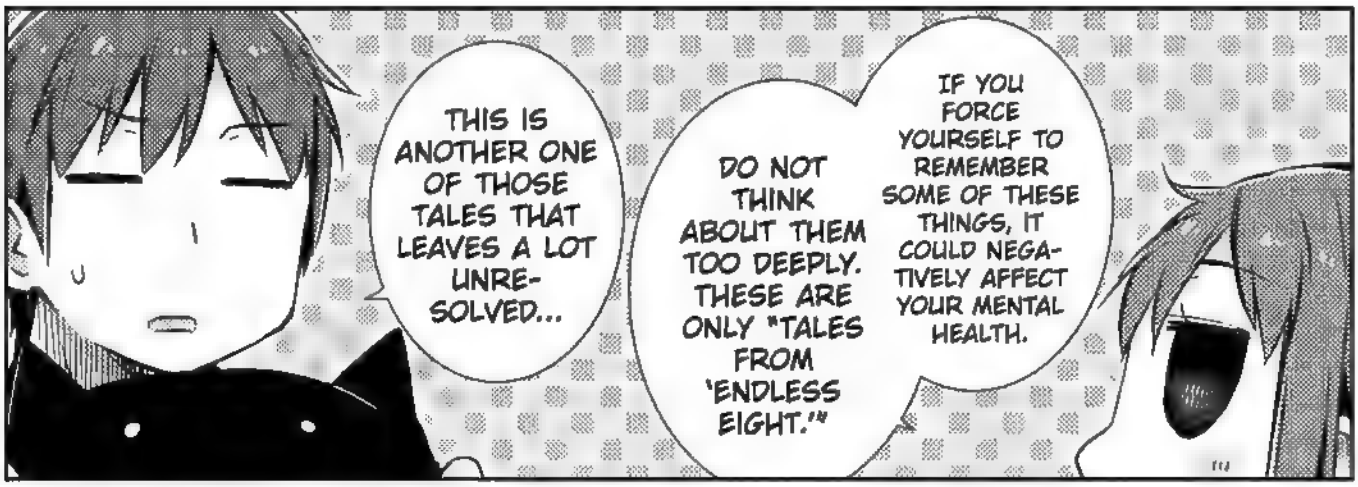
ALL RIGHT, EVERY-ONE, LET'S GO!
AFTER THAT...
H-HEY, DON'T SAY SCARY STUFF LIKE THAT
I WONDER IF US STROLLING INTO A YOUKAI LAIR...
...FULFILLS THE CONDITIONS OF A KID-NAPPING?
...NO ONE SAW THEM EVER AGAIN...

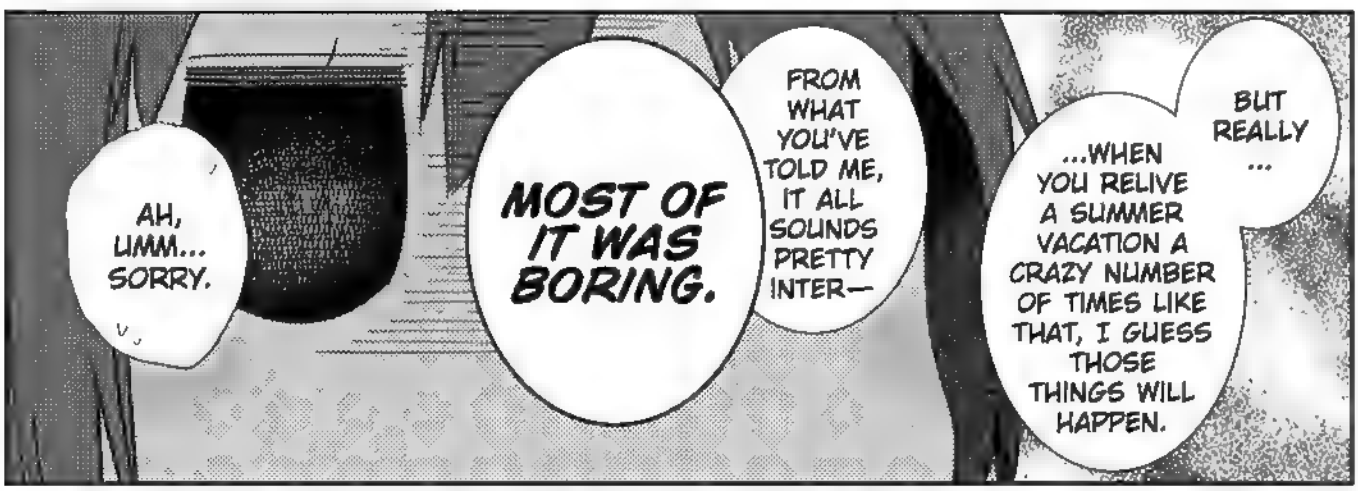

THE END

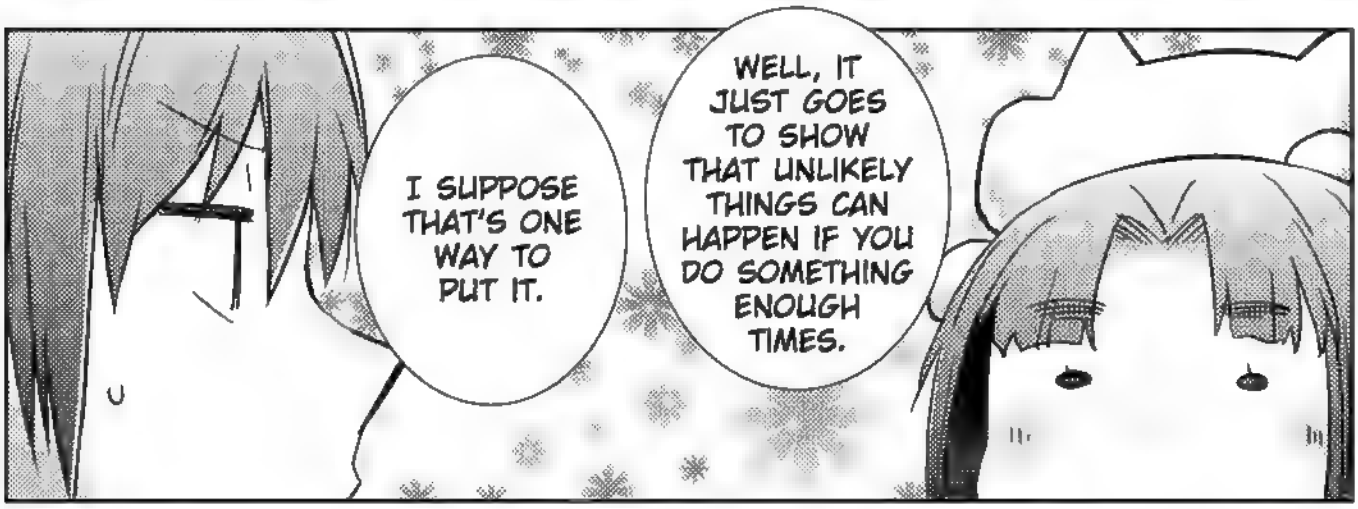
!?
PWOP
THAT HAPPENED ONCE DURING THE "ENDLESS EIGHT" INCIDENT.

WHAT HAP-PENED !?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN "DISAP-PEARED FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH"!?
OH YEAH, I REMEMBER NOW. NAGATO-SAN SUDDENLY DISAPPEARED FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH, AND IT TOOK ME BY SUR-PRISE!

YOU'RE LEAVING OUT SOME-THING VERY IMPORTANT!
WE ULTIMATELY SPENT THE REST OF OUR SUMMER VACATION THERE.
ポポポン
BUBUM
WE ENDED UP IN A PLACE THAT YOU NORMALLY CAN'T INTERFERE WITH FROM THIS SIDE.


THIS IS ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE TALES THAT LEAVES A LOT UNRE-SOLVED...
DO NOT THINK ABOUT THEM TOO DEEPLY. THESE ARE ONLY "TALES FROM 'ENDLESS EIGHT.'"
IF YOU FORCE YOURSELF TO REMEMBER SOME OF THESE THINGS, IT COULD NEGA-TIVELY AFFECT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH.


AH, UMM... SORRY.
MOST OF IT WAS BORING.
FROM WHAT YOU'VE TOLD ME, IT ALL SOUNDS PRETTY INTER—
BUT REALLY ...
...WHEN YOU RELIVE A SUMMER VACATION A CRAZY NUMBER OF TIMES LIKE THAT, I GUESS THOSE THINGS WILL HAPPEN.


I SUPPOSE THAT'S ONE WAY TO PUT IT.
WELL, IT JUST GOES TO SHOW THAT UNLIKELY THINGS CAN HAPPEN IF YOU DO SOMETHING ENOUGH TIMES.

THE END.
OH REALLY?
NOT TOO LONG AGO, THERE WAS THIS STRANGE VALLEY...
SPEAKING OF STRANGE THINGS...

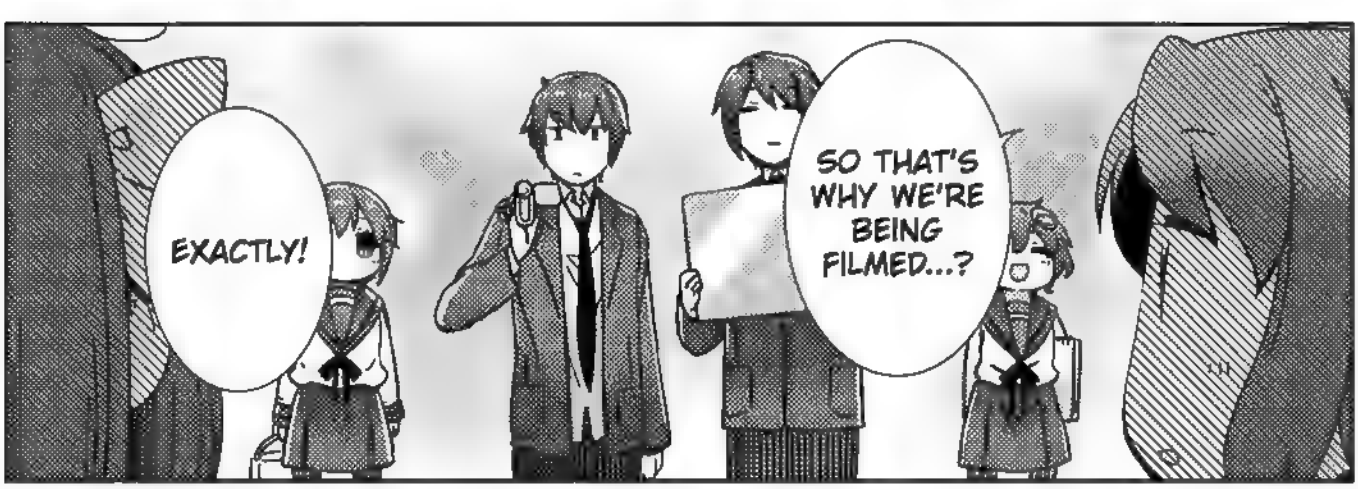
TALES
FROM
"END-
LESS
EIGHT"

ALL RIGHT!

PWOOF
HEY! HOW'S EVERYONE DOING OUT THERE!?
HEY, SUZUMIYA-SAN! I'M DOING GREAT!
THAT'S GOOD. IF YOU WEREN'T, I WOULD HAVE SENT YOU HOME!
WHAT? W-WELL, I'M GLAD I'M DOING GREAT, THEN!
THAT REALLY WAS A CLOSE ONE...
TENSE
YOU SEE, MIKURU-CHAN...
...TODAY, MIGHT END UP BEING A REALLY ROUGH DAY...SO PREPARE YOURSELF, OKAY?
HUH!? O-OKAY!
BADUM

TITLE DESIGN: YASUMI WATAHASHI

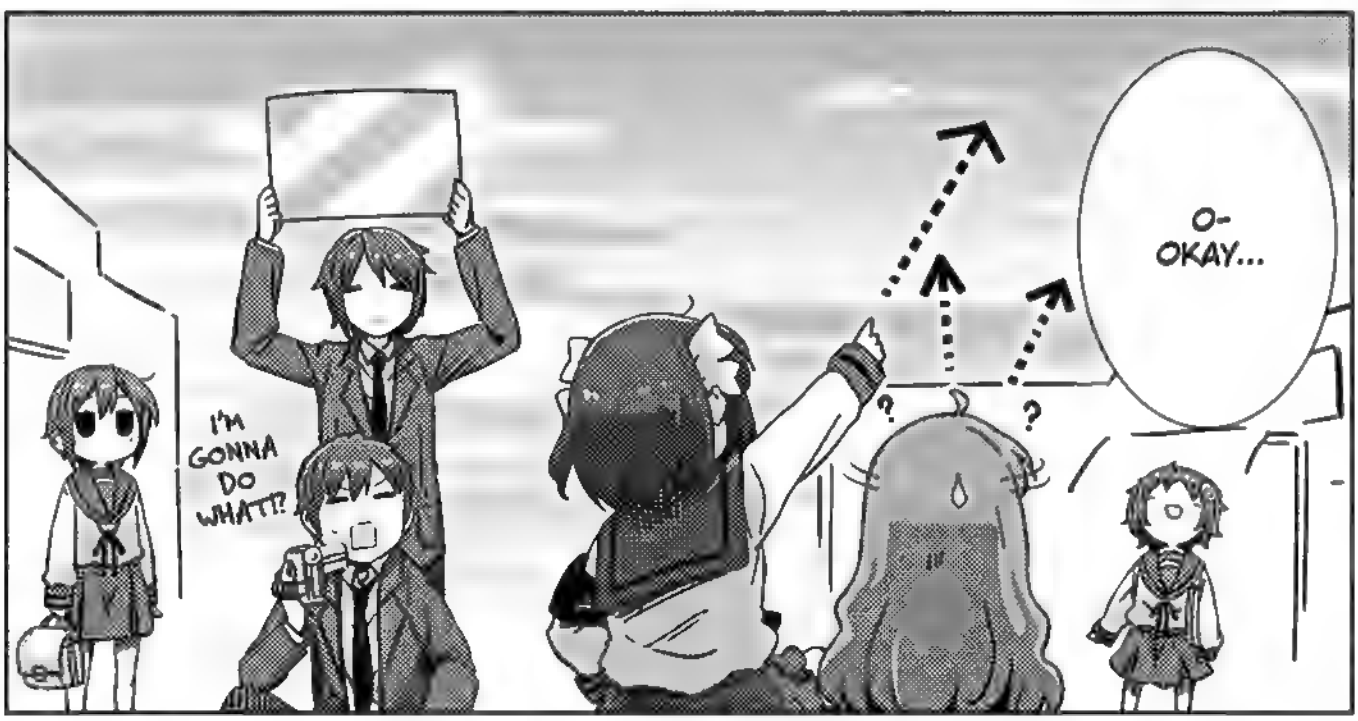
YOU SEE, MIKURU-CHAN...
...I PUT TOGETHER THIS PLAN SO THAT WE COULD DEEPEN OTHERS' UNDERSTAND-ING OF OUR SOS BRIGADE.
SPONTANEOUS!!
SOS
INVESTIGATIVE JOURNEY



"UGH! I WANT TO GO, BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW TO GET THERE!!!"
IT'S BECAUSE THEY DON'T KNOW HOW TO GET TO NORTH HIGH SCHOOL!
GRR...
MYSTERIOUS THING
THEN IT CAME TO ME...
I WAS WONDERING WHY, EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE A WEB-SITE, MYSTE-RIOUS THINGS WEREN'T COMING TO VISIT US.
OF COURSE NOT...
THAT'S EXACTLY WHY!
TH-THAT'S WHY!?
BABAM
キュン
OH! I GET IT NOW!
BAM
...WE'RE GOING TO FILM OUR-SELVES WALKING FROM THE STATION TO SCHOOL!
SO IN ORDER TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR MYSTERIOUS THINGS TO COME VISIT US...

ALL RIGHT, MIKURU-CHAN!
LET'S START OUR SPONTA-NEOUS SOS INVESTIGA-TION!
POINT
ヒ!!!
...UMM, WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?
KYON IS GOING TO EDIT IN A PICTURE OF NORTH HIGH WHERE MY FINGER IS POINTING, SO LOOK THIS WAY TOO, MIKURU-CHAN!

ARMBAND: BRIGADE CHIEF



ROUTE TO SCHOOL
N.H.S.
GOAL
HEART'S-LAST-SPURT HILL
BRIDGE
MY-HEART-CAN'T-TAKE-IT-ANYMORE HILL
HEART-KILLING HILL
BRIDGE
BRIDGE
HEARTRENDING STAIRS
HEARTBREAK HILL
STA.
START
SO ANYWAY, I'M GOING TO USE THIS ROUGH MAP I DREW...
...AND DESCRIBE THE GENERAL ROUTE TO GET FROM HERE TO NORTH HIGH.
WOW!
THAT'S THE GENERAL IDEA!
IT LOOKS LIKE THIS MIGHT BE TOUGH ON THE HEART...
AH... UMM...
N.H.S.
MOUN-TAIN!!
TOO HIGH!!
HILL!!
STA.
IT'S BASI-CALLY A HILL!
WHEN YOU THINK OF HILLS YOU THINK OF NORTH HIGH!
BECAUSE WHEN YOU THINK OF NORTH HIGH, YOU THINK OF HILLS!

*NOT TO SCALE

HUH? I DON'T REMEMBER IT BEING LIKE THAT...
HARUHI'S PERSONAL IMPRES-SION.
I MEAN, BY THE TIME YOU'VE CROSSED THE THIRD BRIDGE, THE AIR'S ALREADY GETTING THIN!!!
THE AIR IS THIN!
RMBL
N.H.S.
RMBL

I'M THE LEADER OF THE SOS BRIGADE, HARUHI SUZUMIYA!
MIKURU-CHAN... JUST WHO DO YOU THINK I AM?

S-SUZUMIYA-SAN, I...I'M NOT SURE I CAN MAKE IT IF IT'S GOING TO BE THAT TOUGH ON THE HEART...

OKAY!
THE TIME HAS COME!!! LET'S CLIMB, MIKURU-CHAN!!!
DUNDUN

SUZU-MIYA-SAN...!!!
ALL THE WAY UP THIS DAN-GEROUS PATH!!!
IF NEED BE, I'LL KEEP CLIMBING WITH ONE OR EVEN TWO OF YOU ON MY BACK!
SWOON

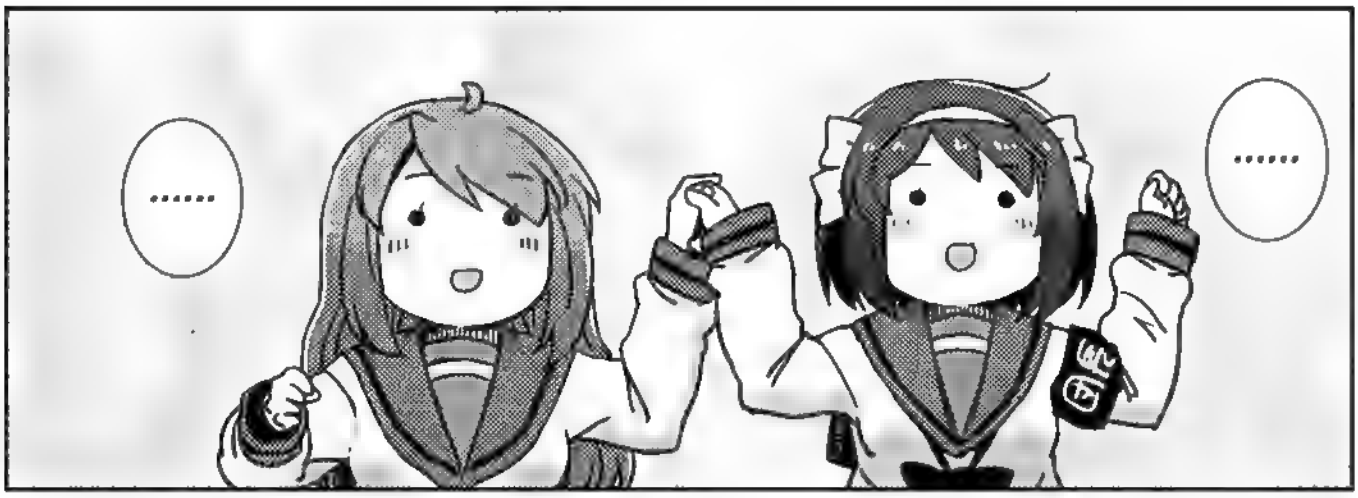
LOOK, MIKURU-CHAN! THOSE ARE THE HEART-RENDING STAIRS!!
YES!

NH! ARE YOU DOING ALL RIGHT, MIKURU-CHAN?
YES!

LOOK MIKURU-CHAN, IT'S A WATER-FALL!!
WOW!

THE WAY KYON HAS BEEN ACTING LATELY...
HE REALLY IS AN IDIOT, ISN'T HE?

WE MADE IT, MIKURU-CHAN!!
YAY!!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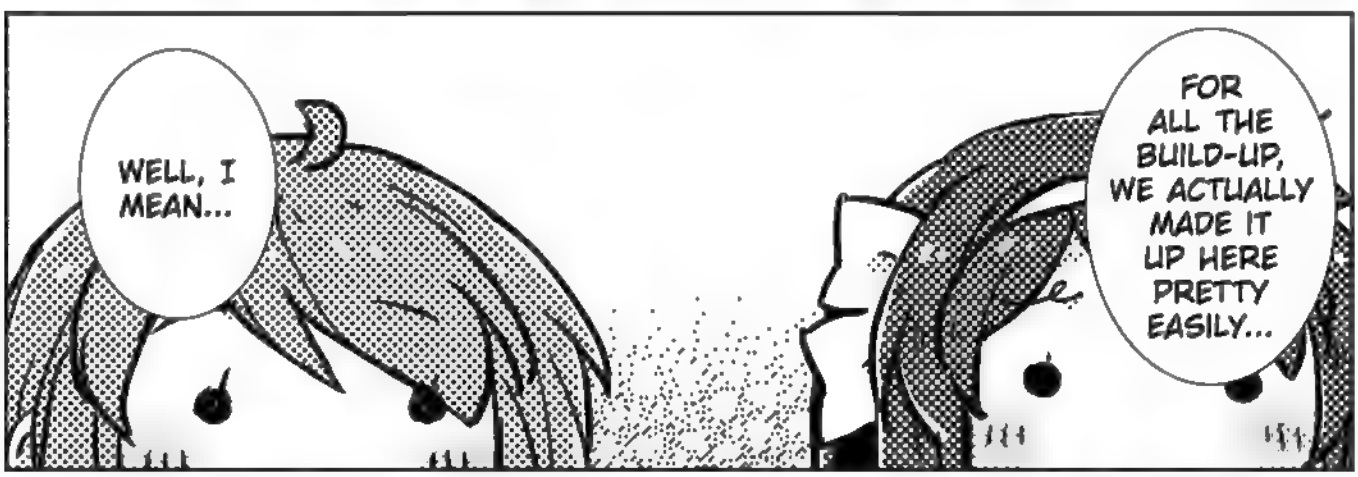

WELL, I MEAN...
FOR ALL THE BUILD-UP, WE ACTUALLY MADE IT UP HERE PRETTY EASILY...

...WE TAKE THIS ROUTE EVERY DAY ON THE WAY TO SCHOOL, AFTER ALL...

FOR THE TENTH VOLUME OF *HARUHI-CHAN*, I WAS FINALLY ABLE TO GO ON-SITE TO GATHER MATERIAL.

AT WORK!

SIGN: CAFÉ DREAM | FLAG LUNCHTIME

WHY DON'T WE FOLLOW SUZUMIYA-SAN AND COMPANY'S EXAMPLE...
...AND PLAN SOME KIND OF ACTIVITY TO STRENGTHEN THE BONDS AMONG US?
HUH? IT'S NOT LIKE WE'VE BEEN "STRENGTHENING OUR BONDS" WITH ANY OF THE CRAP HARUHI MAKES US DO.

HEH-HEH. KYON, IT'S NOT IMPORTANT WHAT YOU THINK OR DON'T THINK.
FROM AN OUTSIDER'S PERSPECTIVE, YOU GUYS DISPLAY A LOT OF GROUP UNITY.
IRK IRK
STARE

WE HAVE NO NEED FOR STRONG BONDS BETWEEN US!
THE ONLY THING THAT MATTERS TO ME IS WHETHER OR NOT I CAN USE YOU!!!

THIS IS STU-PID!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "STRENGTH-ENING OUR BONDS"!?
ガン

HMPH. THIS WAS A WASTE OF TIME...
I'M LEAVING!

SHOOVE
IF YOU DON'T MOVE, I CAN'T LEAVE! DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND!?
LOOK AT WHERE I'M SITTING!
HEY...I'M LEAVING, SO MOVE OUT OF THE WAY...
STARE
DON'T GIVE ME THAT! THIS IS WHY I HATE PEOPLE FROM THE PAST! THEY HAVE NO SENSE!
DO I HAVE TO?
TACHIBANA! DON'T JUST SIT THERE! DO SOMETHING!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, MY "ANNOYING SELF"!? RGH!!
SIP
FINE... KUYOU-SAN, FUJIWARA-SAN'S BEING HIS ANNOYING SELF AGAIN, SO COULD YOU PLEASE MOVE?
FINE, WHATEVER, JUST HELP ME!
DOES WHETHER YOU'RE FROM THE FUTURE OR THE PAST REALLY MATTER IN THIS SITUATION?
SIP

SO THAT'S WHAT IT IS. OKAY, I'LL TELL HIM.

SHWP

UM, FUJIWARA-SAN, RIGHT NOW KUYOU-SAN IS...

HAAH...
HAAH...
OKAY.
GO ON.
WHISPER

I CAN TELL THAT JUST BY LOOK-ING!!
...BUSY STARING AT HER PARFAIT, SO SHE DOESN'T WANT TO MOVE.

IT'S BECAUSE OF NONSENSE LIKE THIS THAT I CAN'T UNDERSTAND ALIENS.
CAN'T YOU TELL THAT NOW IS NOT THE TIME FOR YOUR WEIRD BEHAV-IOR!?
LIKE YOU'RE ONE TO TALK!!!
BOOM

WHY CAN'T YOU ACT LIKE PART OF THE GROUP!?
DO YOU REALLY HAVE ANY BUSINESS SAYING THAT!?
POINT
YOU'RE NOT LOOKING DOWN ON ME LIKE I'M A LESSER BEING, ARE YOU!?
HOW CAN YOU EVEN SAY THAT RIGHT NOW!?
PFF!
KUH!
KUH!

TCH!
I KNOW WE'VE ONLY FORMED AN ALLIANCE, BUT...
WHOA! THIS ONE'S THE BIGGEST WORD BOOMER-ANG YET!
BOOM
...CAN'T YOU SHOW A LITTLE BIT OF COURTE-SY!!??
KUH! KUH...

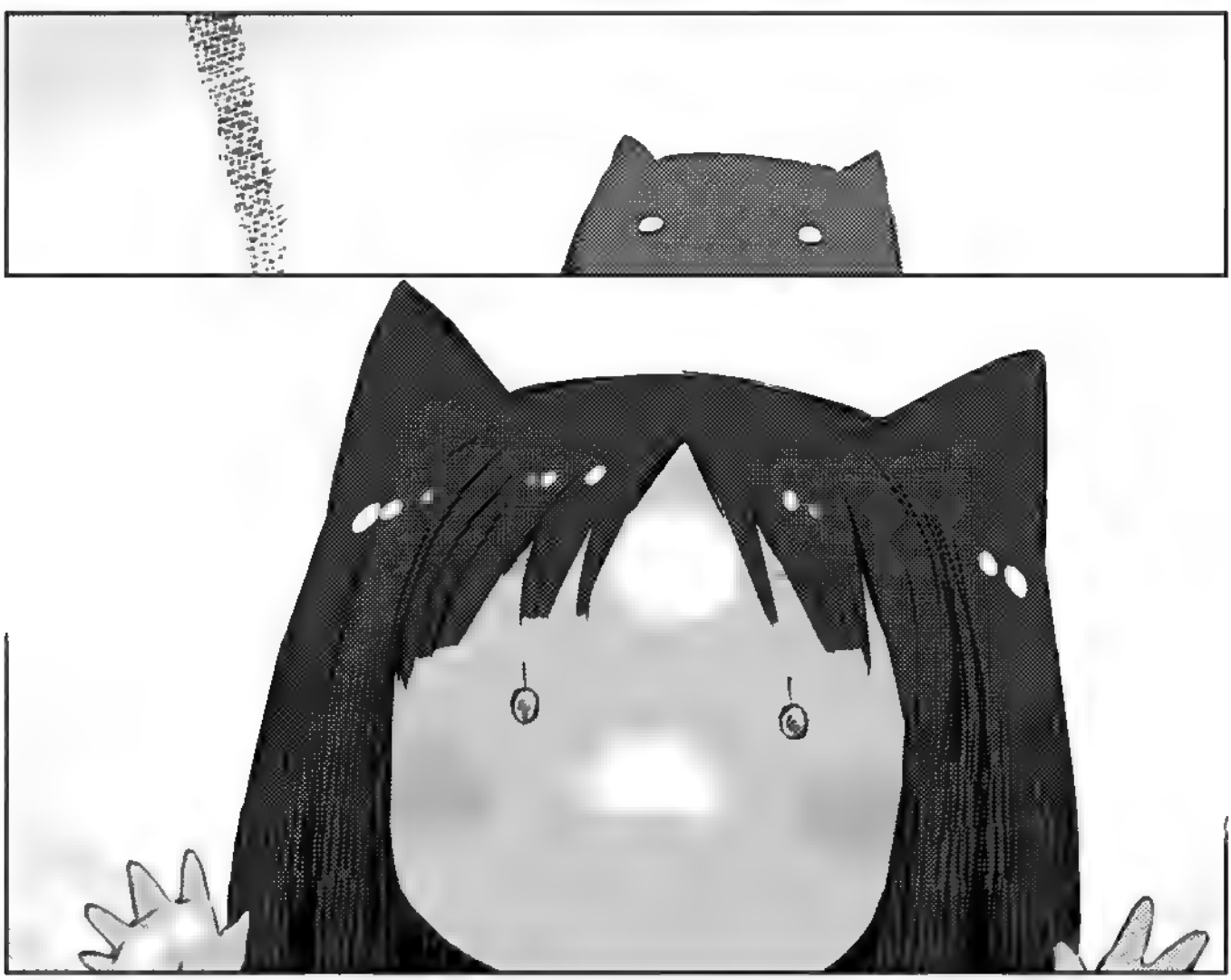
HFF...
HAAH...
PFF! KUH KUH...

HMPH... THIS IS RIDICU-LOUS...
WHUMP
ALL RIGHT, I'LL PLAY ALONG WITH YOU, SO TALK ABOUT WHATEVER "ACTIVITY" YOU WANTED TO TALK ABOUT.
KUH-KUH-KUH... A-ARE YOU SURE, FUJIWARA-KUN...?
KUH! KUH!
DON'T MAKE ME SAY IT AGAIN!
AHEM.
ANYWAY...
SO FOR NEXT WEEKEND, I WAS THINKING...

MAN-AGER!
I'M GOING TO HEAD HOME FOR THE DAY.
AH, ALL RIGHT. THANKS FOR THE HARD WORK.
TEP
TEP
ARE YOU DONE WITH YOUR FRIENDS?
OH?
WHOOSH
CLINK
ALL RIGHT, THEN.
LET'S GO HOME.
DON'T LEAVE!
AT THAT MOMENT, THE FINAL BOOMER-ANG STRUCK A CRITICAL HIT.

SNRK!
HEH
HEH
PFFFT!

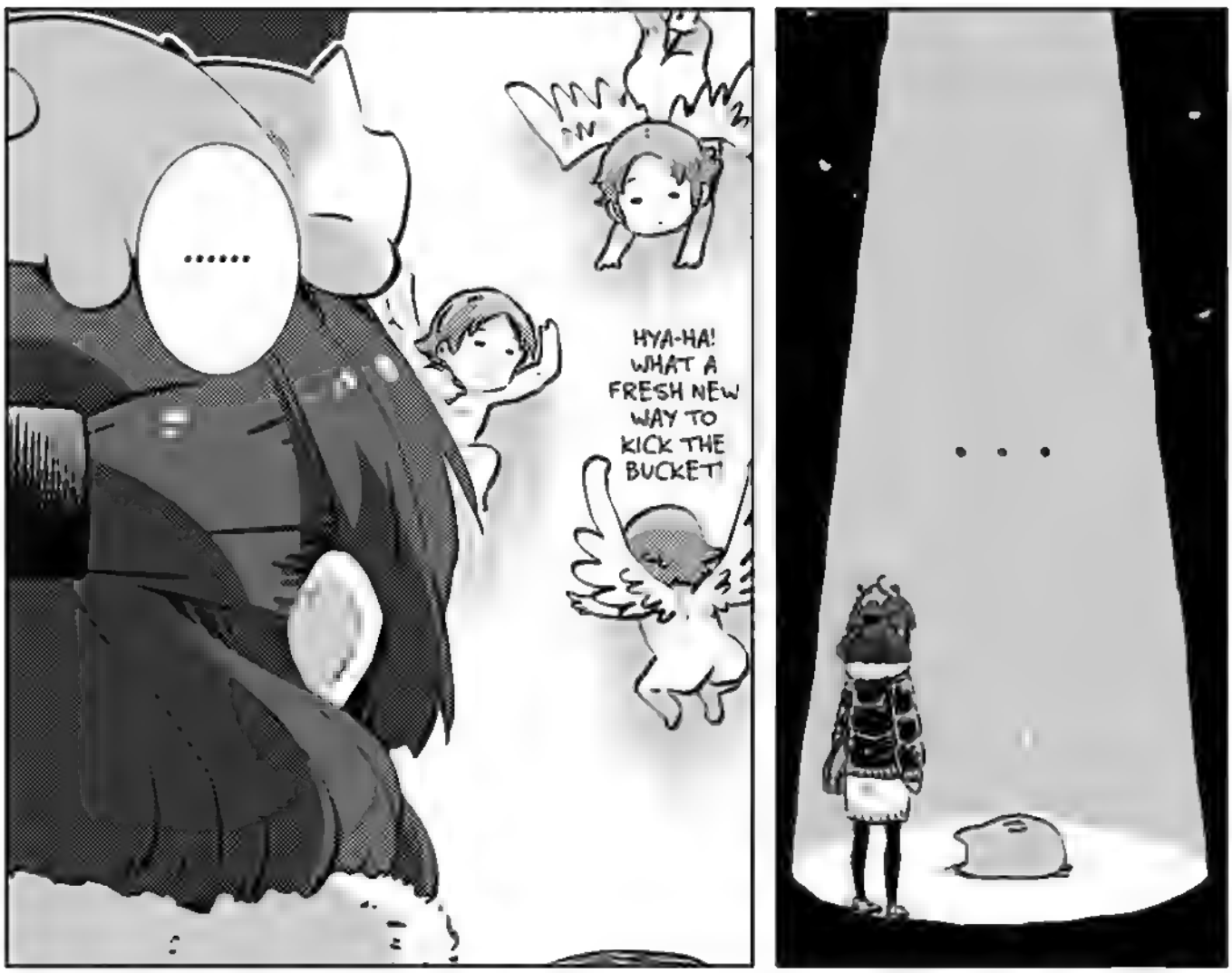
WHEEE!



POINT
ヒロ
OKAY, OKAY. WHAT IS IT?
BOING
ボイン
BOING
ボイン
OH.
IT'S SNOWING, HUH.

I'M SURE IT'LL BE TOO COLD FOR YOU TOO...
WHAT? OUTSIDE? I DON'T WANNA. IT'S COLD.
UWAH?
ZOOM
AT LEAST PUT ON SOME-THING WARM!
DRAG
DRAG
DASH
OKAY, OKAY. WAIT UP!

STOP
ぴと
FLOPPP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HYA-HA! WHAT A FRESH NEW WAY TO KICK THE BUCKET!
. . .

I TOLD YOU IT WAS COLD!!!

PEEK
むくっ

GEEZ... NOW BE A GOOD GIRL AND WARM UP UNDER THE KOTATSU.

I PEELED SOME MANDARIN ORANGES FOR YOU!
TAP
TAP
GLEAM

I'M BACK.
HERE YOU GO.
CLATTER
ZWIP
WASH YOUR HANDS FIRST, PLEASE.
OH, YOU HAD YOURS PEELED FOR YOU? THAT'S NICE.

HYA-HAAAA!

THE SECOND FLOOR OF A CERTAIN LEASED BUILDING
THIS IS WHERE ESPERS WHO HAVE RISEN TO A CERTAIN CALLING GATHER...
FSHHHH
O-OKAY!
NOW! TURN OFF THE STOVE AND CHECK THE TEMPERATURE!
CLICK
GLARE
FSHHHH

THAT'S AMAZING! IT'S EXACTLY EIGHTY DEGREES CELCIUS!
HEH-HEH. OF COURSE!
WOW!
WELL...
WITHOUT HAVING A CONVERSATION WITH THE WATER, ONE CANNOT PROPERLY PREPARE TEA...
TRUE MAIDS LISTEN TO THE VOICE OF THE WATER; THEY FEEL ITS BREATH.
THAT'S AMAZING, MORI-SAN!
A FACE OF UN-WAVERING PRIDE
...IT'S COFFEE WE'RE MAKING RIGHT NOW, THOUGH, NOT TEA.

"GIVING OUR THANKS" !?
OKAY!
NOW WE POUR THE WATER IN, GIVING OUR THANKS FOR EACH AND EVERY DROP.
HEH-HEH. WE'RE NOT DONE YET.

EVEN THOUGH YOU HELPED US OUT, IT'S TAKING SO LONG FOR US TO PROVIDE REFRESH-MENT...

I'M TERRIBLY SORRY.

WELL, THAT IS TRUE... THAT IS TRUE, BUT...

I MEAN, THEY'RE MAKING IT RIGHT NOW, RIGHT?

OH, I DON'T MIND IT BEING A LITTLE LATE.

...IF I HAD TO GUESS HOW MUCH LONGER IT WILL TAKE BEFORE THE DRINK GETS TO YOU... LET'S SEE...
AN HOUR, PERHAPS?
IT'LL BE COLD BY THEN!
DUNDUN
H''

MAKING COFFEE IS APPARENTLY SOMETHING YOU CANNOT RUSH...
WHAT'S WITH THAT LEVEL OF OBSES-SION...?

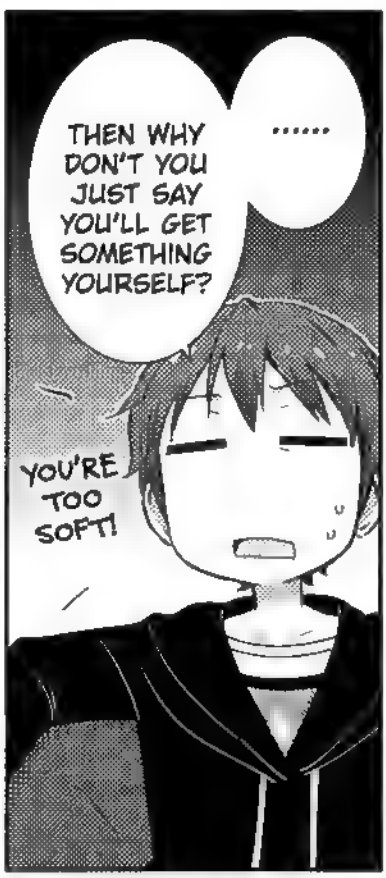
YOU ARE RIGHT. IT IS AN OBSESSION.
?
THAT OBSESSION HAS, SINCE THE FOUNDING OF THE AGENCY...

DUNDUN
...LED TO OUR FIRST EVER FOOD SUPPLY PROBLEM.

...WHENEVER WE WISH FOR SOMETHING TO DRINK, IT IS MORI-SAN WHO PREPARES IT!
THAT IS BE-CAUSE...
WAITING
じっくり…
RIGHT NOW, OUR BIGGEST ISSUE IS KEEPING HYDRATED.

AH... PERFECT TIMING. ARAKAWA-SAN HAS JUST COME BACK... WATCH CARE-FULLY.

WE CAN'T...


.....
THEN WHY DON'T YOU JUST SAY YOU'LL GET SOMETHING YOURSELF?
YOU'RE TOO SOFT!

ARAKAWA-SAN IS JUST BACK FROM HIS WALK AND IS PROBABLY THIRSTY.
WHISTLE
WATCH AS HE CASUALLY HEADS TOWARD THE SINK.
THIS IS LIKE AN ENCYCLOPEDIA ILLUSTRATION OF CASUAL!!
TOUCH
TWITCH
OH, ARAKAWA-SAN!
WELCOME BACK.

GRIP
IF YOU'LL JUST WAIT A LITTLE BIT, I'LL FIX YOU SOME BARLEY TEA, OKAY?
GEEZ. IF YOU'RE THIRSTY, YOU SHOULD JUST SAY SO!
WHAT...?
I'M FINE JUST DRINKING TAP WATER...
HA-HA-HA... YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THAT FOR ME!
NO, WELL ...
IF YOU WANT TO GET RE-HYDRATED, I JUST THOUGHT I COULD HELP...
WELL, I...
WAS I A... BOTHER...?
GLOOM
OH...I'M SORRY.

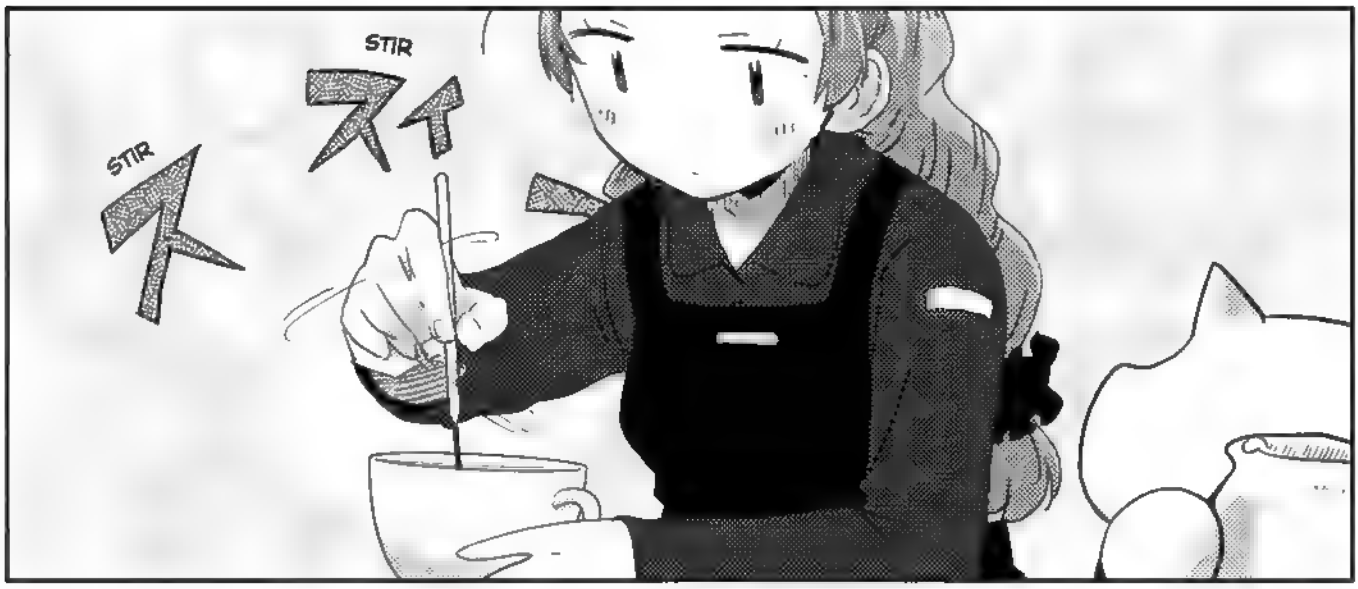
I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO...
SMILE
...YOUR DELICIOUS BARLEY TEA.
HE HAS NO REGRETS.

WE HAVE A NEW ORDER!
OKAY!

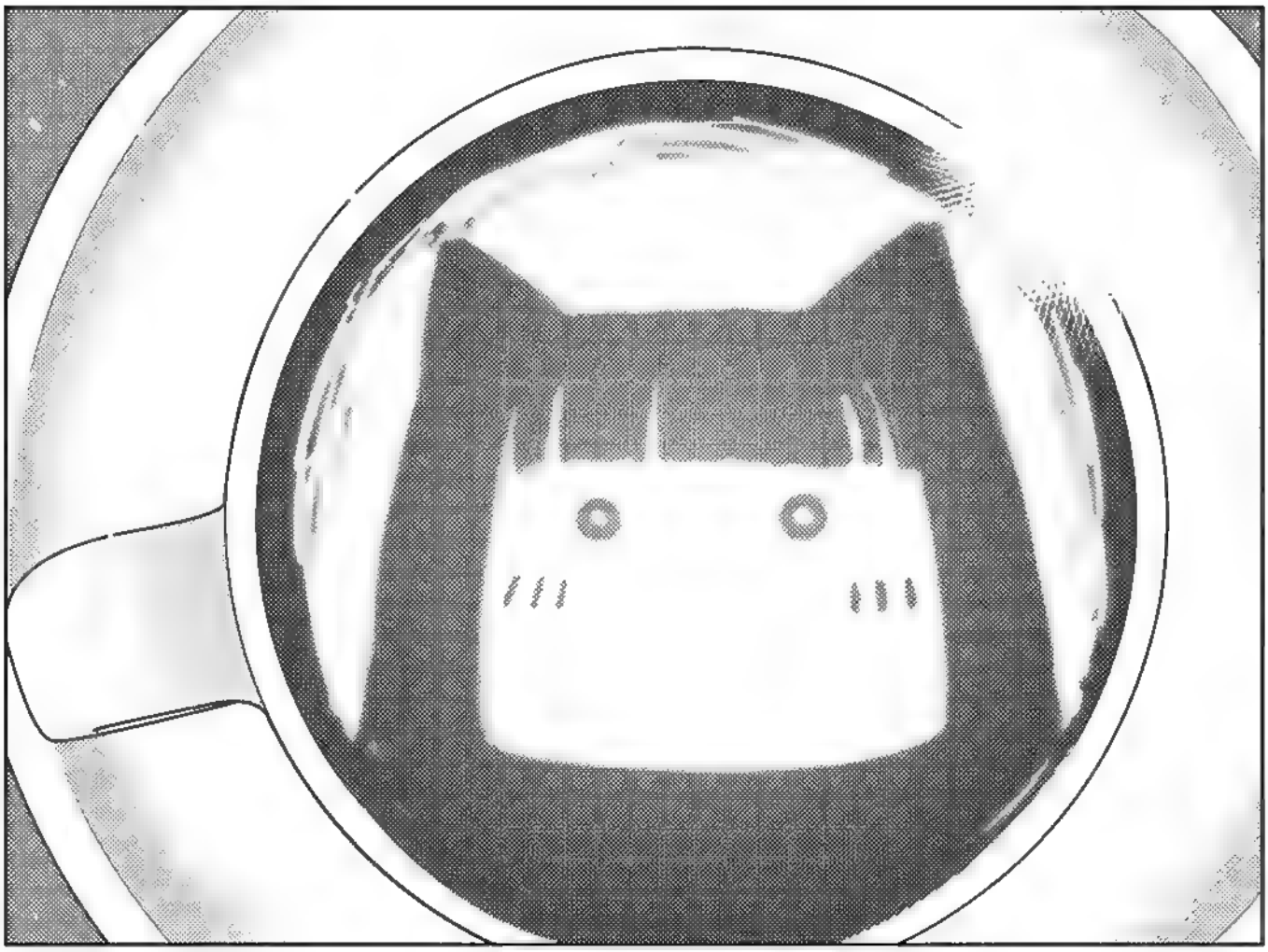
IT IS AS YOU SEE.
ARA-KAWA-SAN

PEOPLE ARE GOING TO GET ANGRY, SO STOP RIGHT THERE.
MAKING UP ANOTHER WEIRD PLOT POINT...
HE'S LYING.
THAT IS MORI-SAN'S TRUE ESPER ABILITY...
...MAID ROYALE! (OBLIGATORY SERVICE!)
FIRST, WE HEAT DRIED BARLEY IN A PAN.
SIZZLE
THE WAY OF THE DELICIOUS BARLEY TEA.
SIZZLE
SHE IS...
...SHE REALLY IS OBSESSED WITH THIS STUFF...
THEY'RE FRYING SOME-THING!!!
SIZZLE
WELL, I MEAN, ESPER ABILITIES ASIDE...
FIDGET
FIDGET
THEY'RE FRYING SOME-THING!

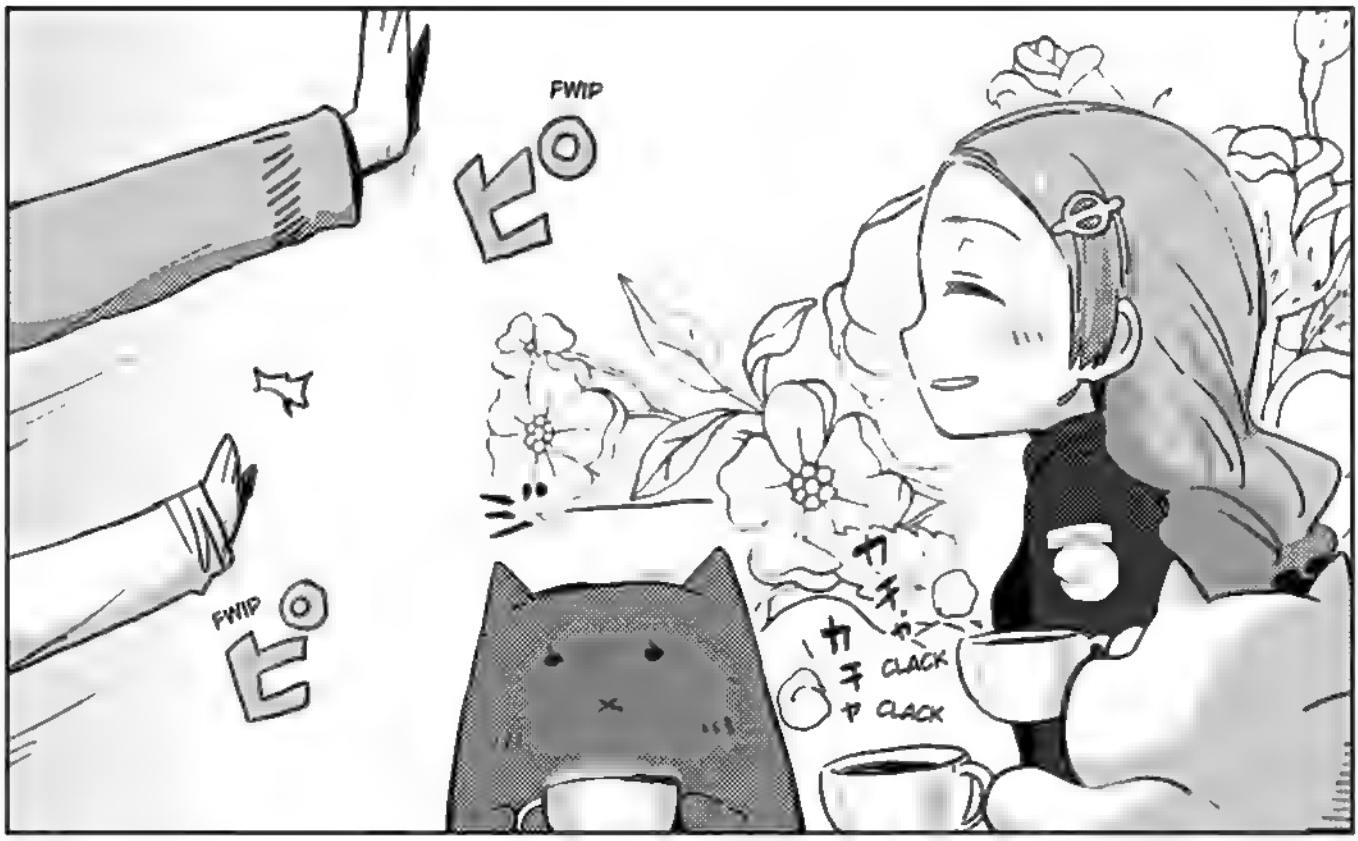
SHP
DRIP
ポタポタ
DRIP
POUR
SHLP
スゃ〜

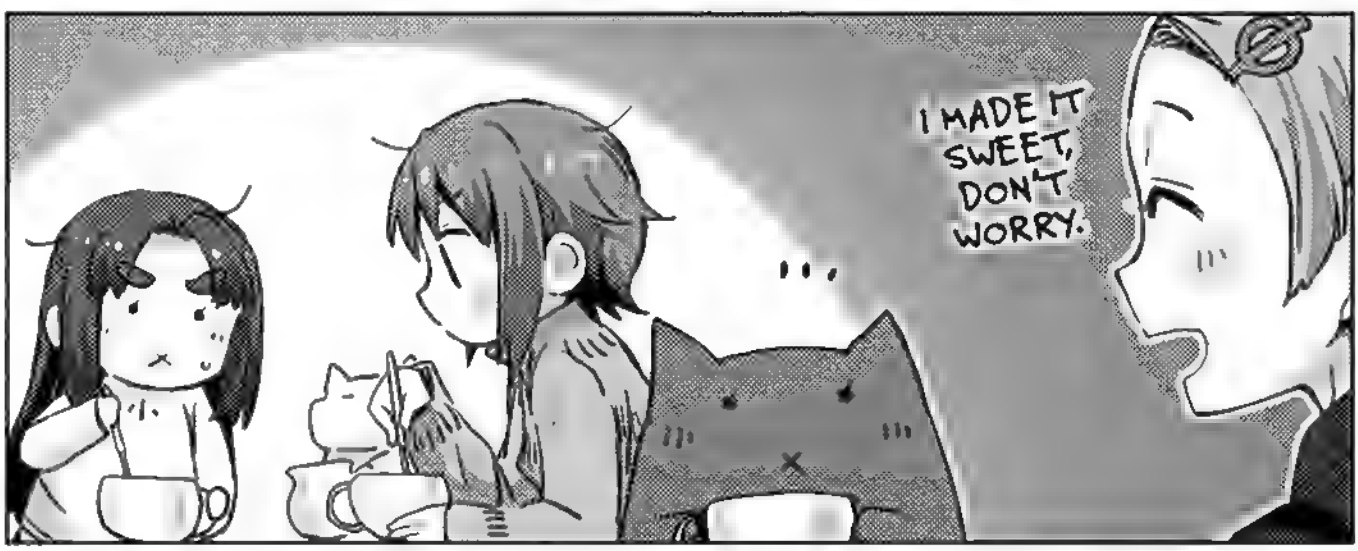

STIR
STIR

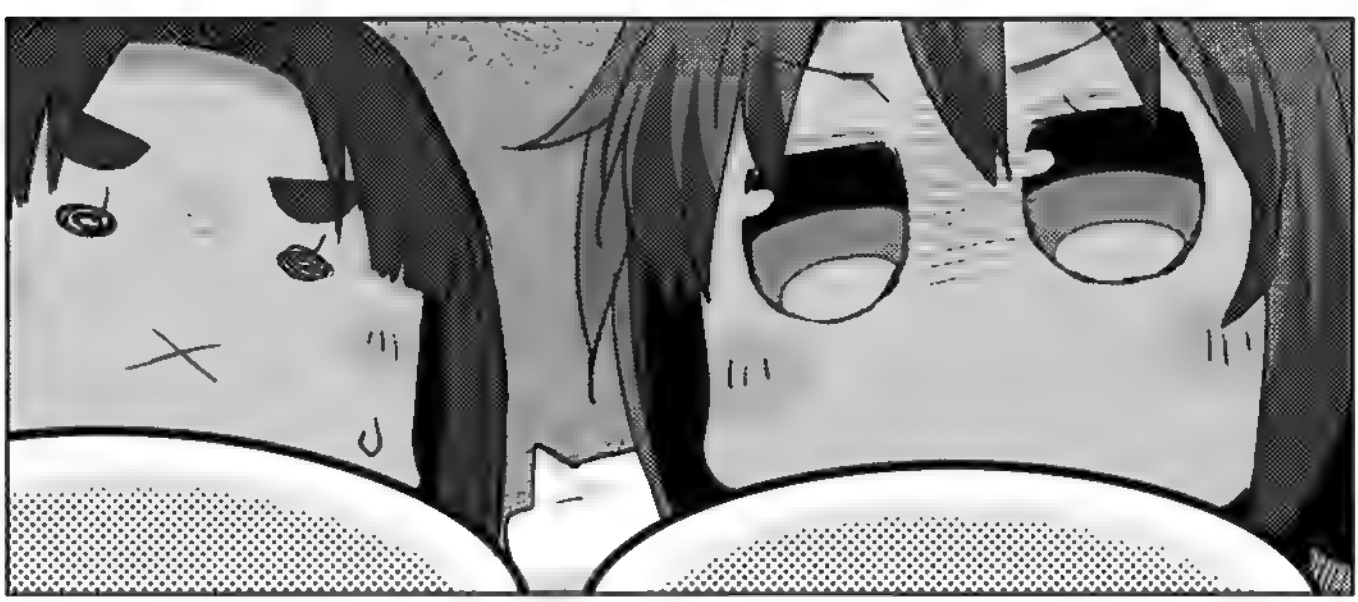
?

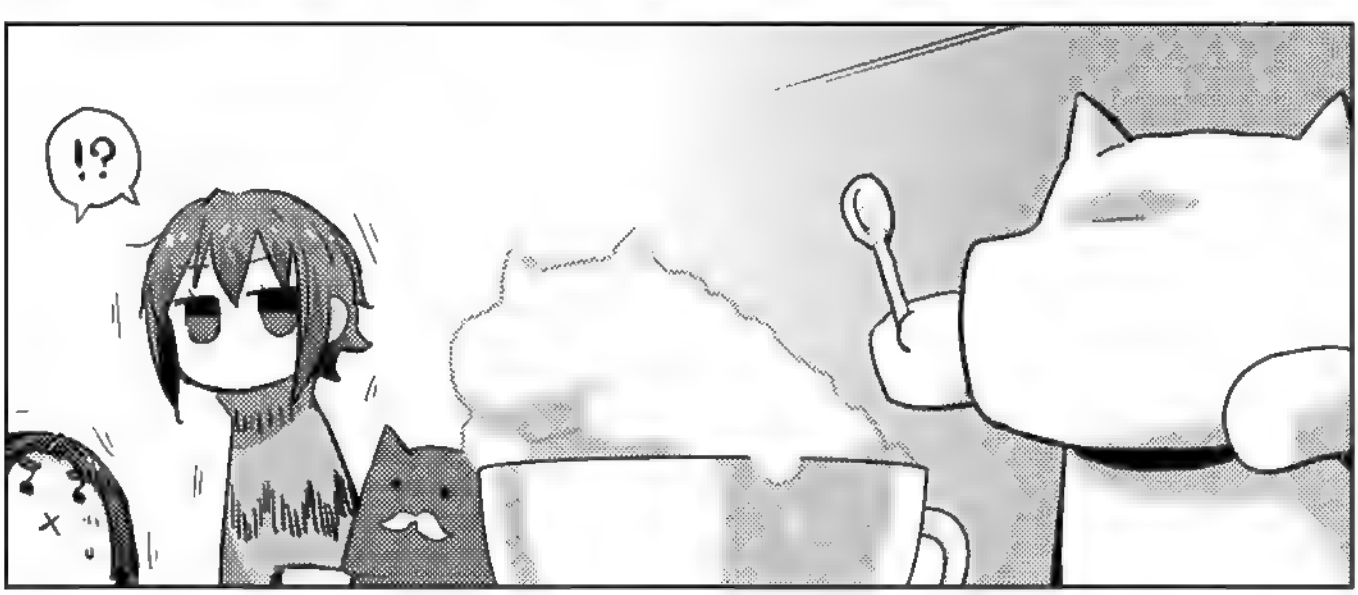


I HAD THEM TEACH ME AT WORK.
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP

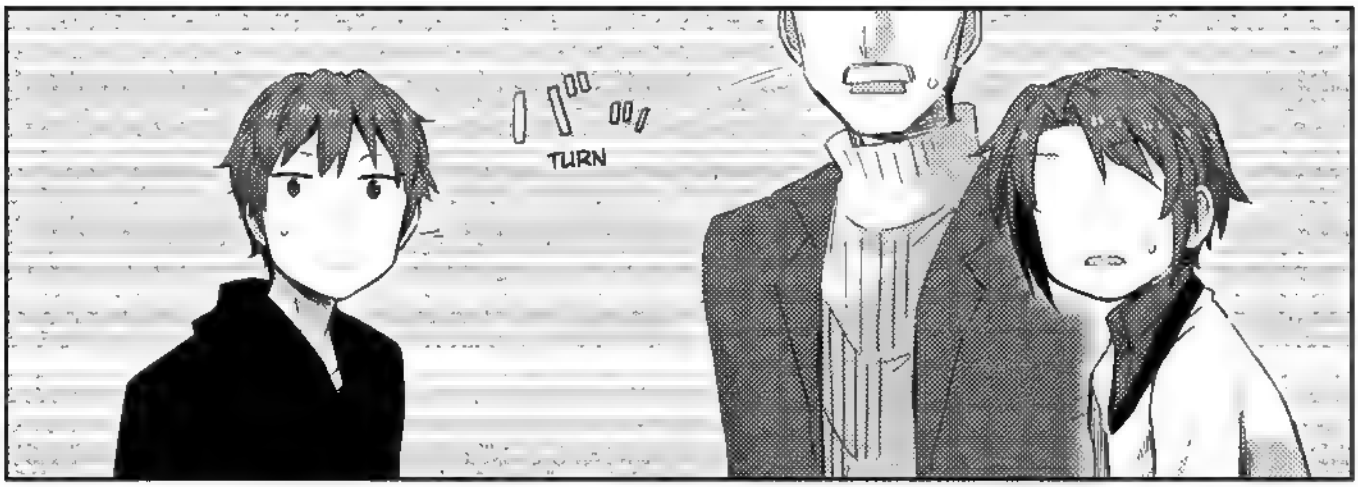

FWIP
FWIP
CLACK
CLACK


I MADE IT SWEET, DON'T WORRY.



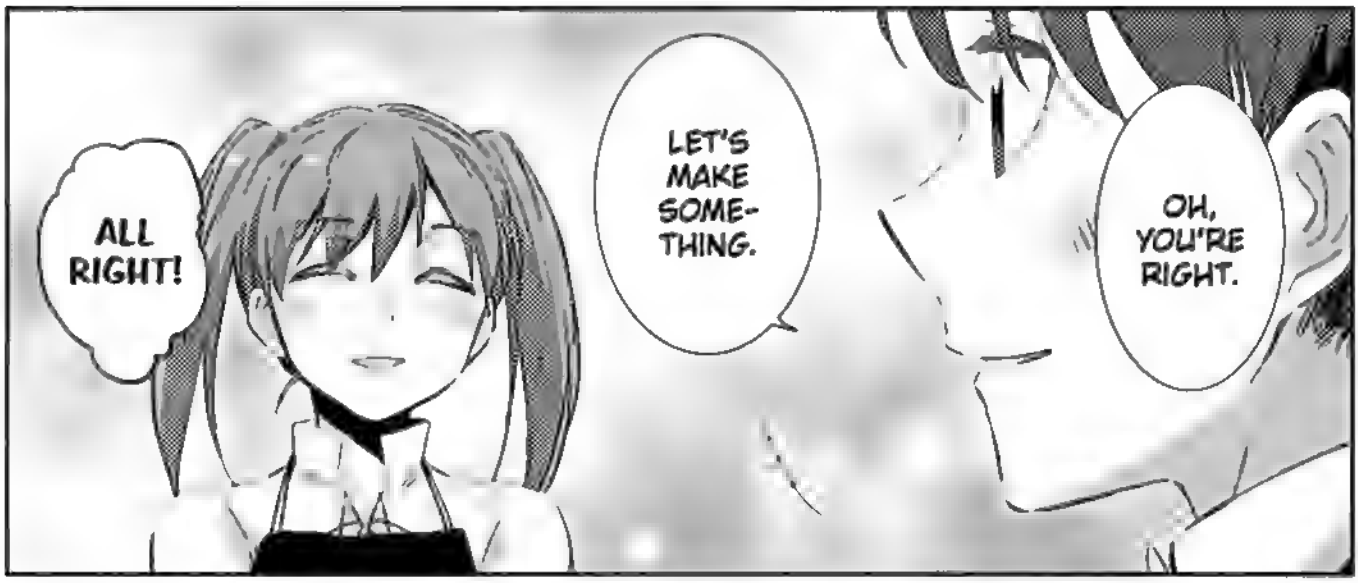


ONE HOUR LATER
WOW! IT'S DONE!
TWITCH ヒクッ
NOD カクッ
NOD カクッ
YEAH, UH-HUH.
YOU'RE RIGHT.
GLOW
SORRY FOR THE WAIT, EVERYONE!
YOUR DRINKS ARE READY!


TURN

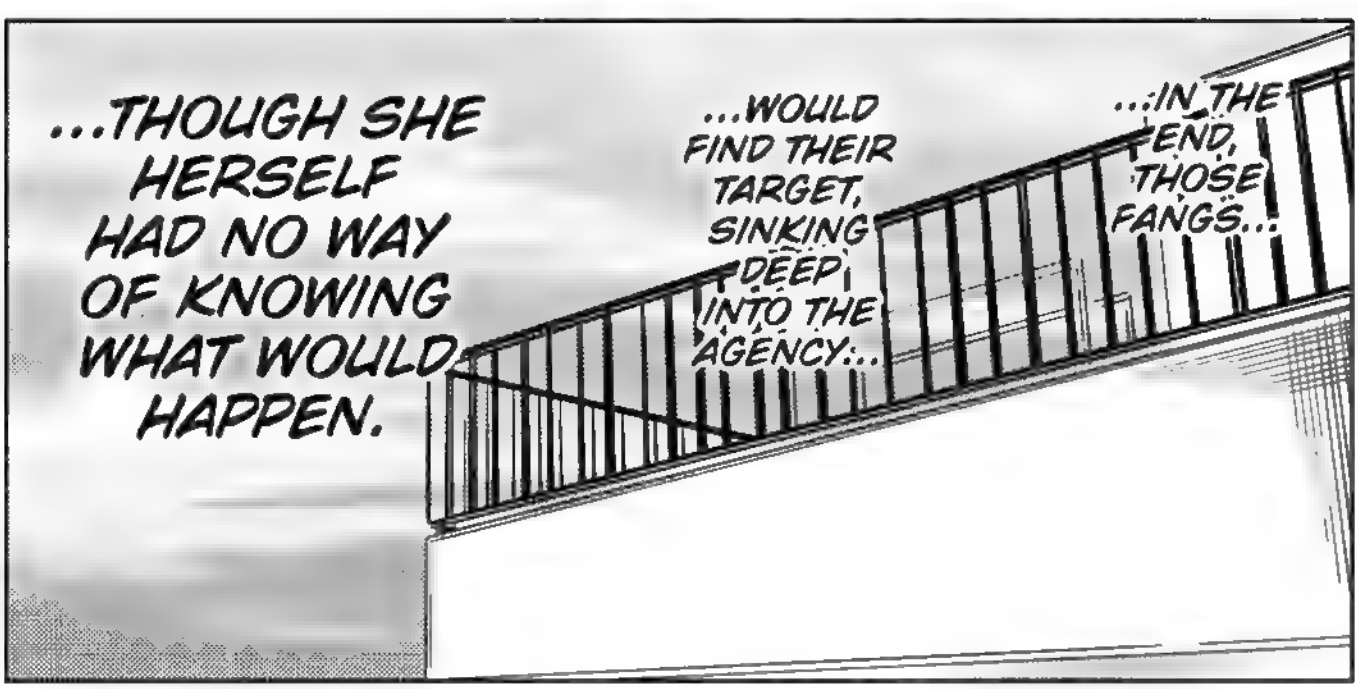
BEAM

DO WE HAVE ANY-THING?
OH! IT WOULD BE NICE IF WE HAD SNACKS TO GO WITH IT.
CLINK


ALL RIGHT!
LET'S MAKE SOME-THING.
OH, YOU'RE RIGHT.

!?

YAAAY!
KYOKO TACHIBANA...
SHE ONCE TRIED TO SINK HER FANGS INTO THE AGENCY, AS SHE WAS PART OF A GROUP THAT OPPOSED IT.
AFTERWARD, SHE EVENTUALLY BECAME A FOLLOWER OF SONOU MORI AND THOSE FANGS FELL OUT, BUT...


...THOUGH SHE HERSELF HAD NO WAY OF KNOWING WHAT WOULD HAPPEN.
...WOULD FIND THEIR TARGET, SINKING DEEP INTO THE AGENCY...
...IN THE END, THOSE FANGS...

MUNCH
もっしゃ
MUNCH
もっしゃ

HUNH?
DING!
DINGA-DING!
DING-DINGA-DING!
HUH?
FWIP
HUH? WHAT'S WITH THE CHIRPY MUSIC...?
DUM-DINGA-DAH!
READY, AND!
HERE YOU GO!

SIGN: BRIGADE CHIEF

D-DON'T DO THAT ALL OF A SUDDEN!
YOU TOOK ME BY SUR-PRISE!

HE WOULDN'T COM-PROMISE ON THAT POINT.
..."IT'S GOING TO BE A SURPRISE, SO MAKE SURE TO KEEP IT A SECRET FROM SUZUMIYA-SAN."
I'M SORRY, BUT THE ONE WHO CAME UP WITH THIS IDEA SAID...

WELL...
CREAK
DOES THAT MEAN...?
HUH...?

KYON...!
HARUHI... UMM...

RUSTLE
HERE.

WH-WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?
I MEAN...
BLUSH
HAPPY BIRTHDAY.
THA—

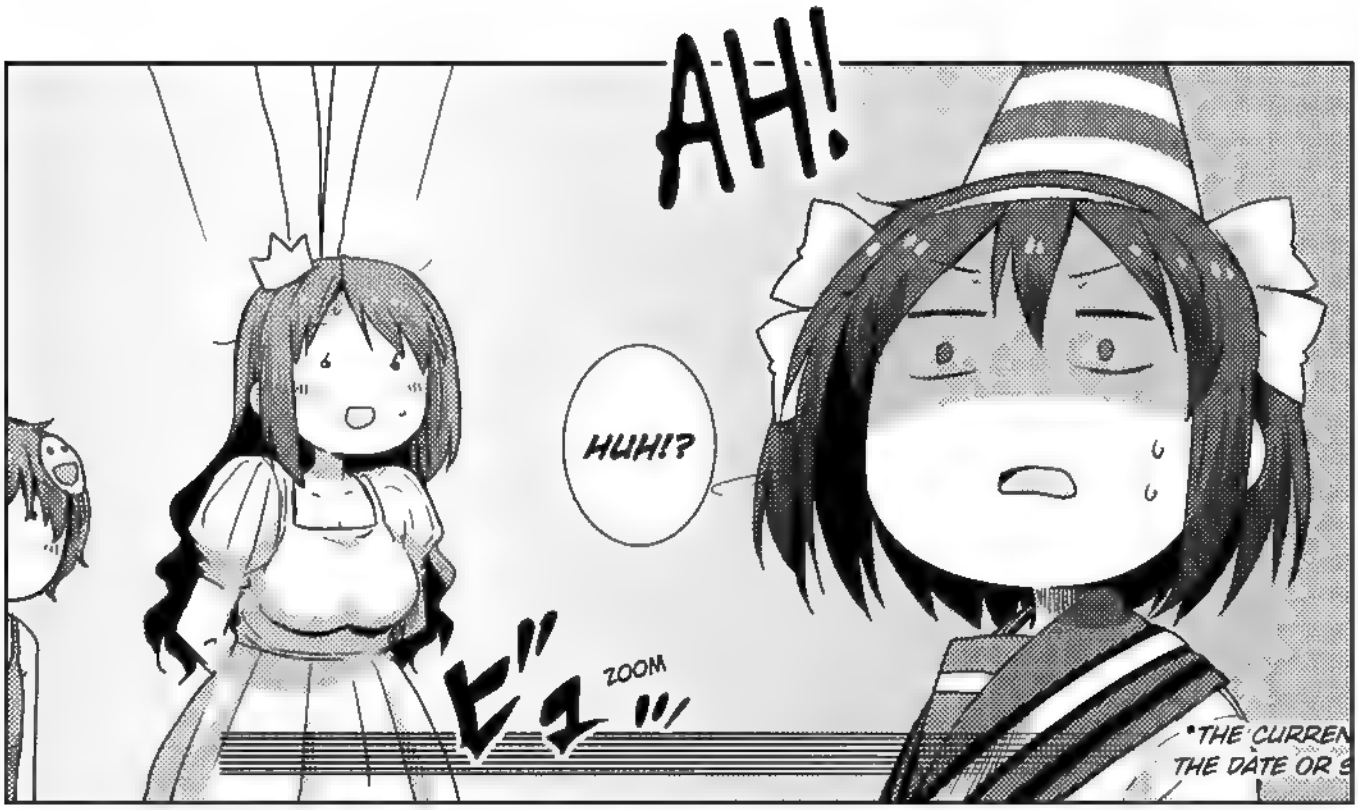
NNNGH...
E-EVEN YOU CAN BE CONSID-ERATE SOME-TIMES, HUH, KYON?
THANKS!
SHUT UP! SHUT UP!
GEEZ... YOU CAN'T EVEN BE HONEST IN GIVING THANKS, CAN YOU?

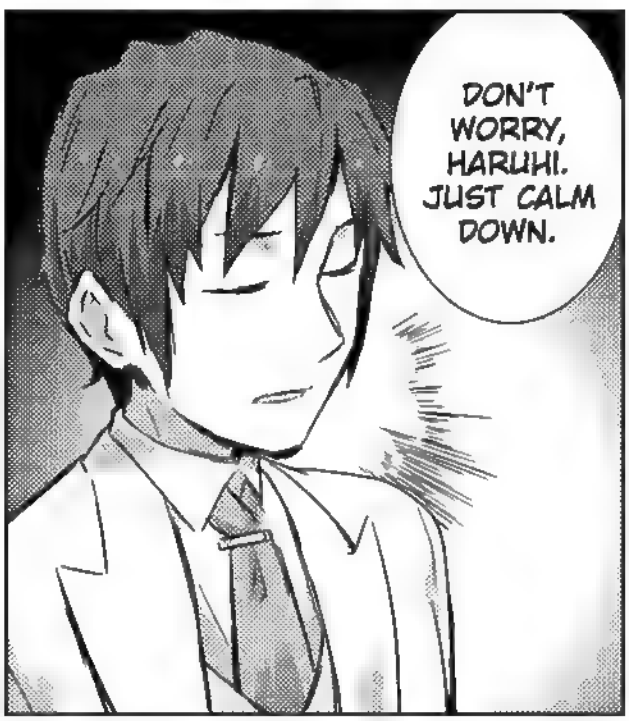
MIKURU-CHAN...
TEE-HEE. COME ON, SUZUMIYA-SAN. IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY, SO YOU HAVE TO SMILE!
POUT
YOU WENT THROUGH ALL THIS TROUBLE JUST FOR ME...
I'M SORRY.
I NEVER THOUGHT YOU WOULD REMEMBER MY BIRTHDAY...
THANK YOU, EVERYONE!

I DIDN
THI
YO
REME
THE
OF
WAS
BIRTH-
DAY!
LOOM

WHOA! YOU'RE CLOSE! YUKI, WHAT'S UP?
THERE'S NO PROBLEM. PLEASE CONTINUE.
HUH? O-OKAY.

MM... AHH!
BUT IT MUST HAVE BEEN A LOT OF TROUBLE, RIGHT?
GIVEN WHAT SEASON IT IS.
SWISHHH
I MEAN...
...JUST LOOK AT THE WEATHER!
HUH?
ANXIOUS
WELL, AFTER ALL, THE WEATHER IS WHAT IT IS!
*THE CURRENT MONTH IN THE STORY HAS NO RELATION TO THE DATE OR SEASON THIS CHAPTER WAS FIRST PUBLISHED.

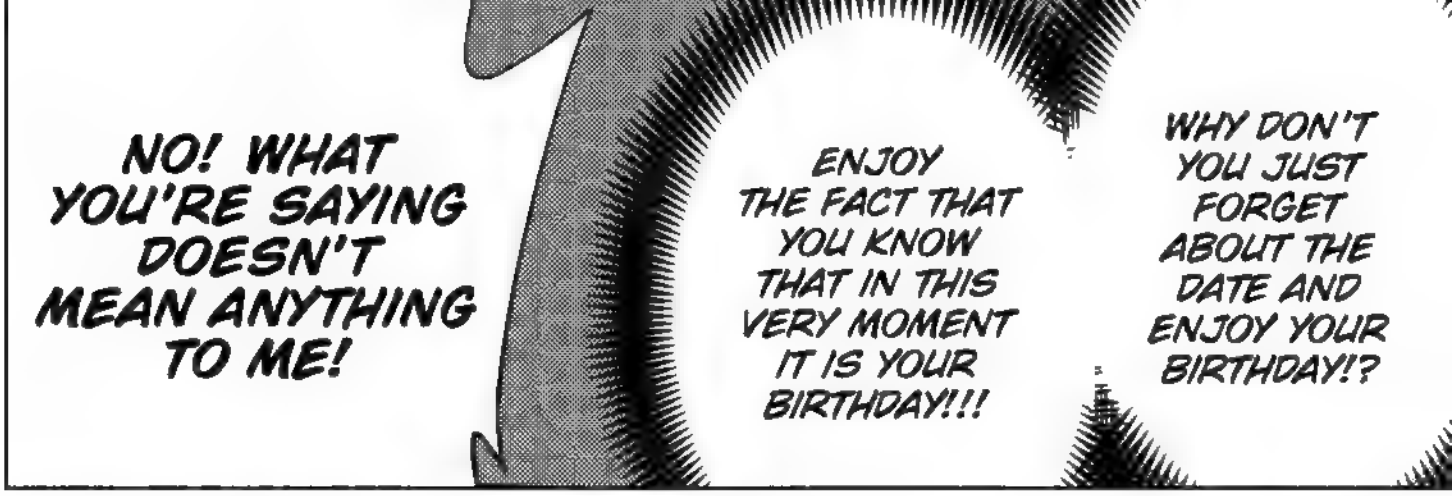

AH!
HUH!?
ZOOM
*THE CURREN
THE DATE OR S


DON'T WORRY, HARUHI. JUST CALM DOWN.

WH-WHAT'S WRONG? EVERYONE'S ACTING REALLY STRANGE.
ARE YOU HIDING SOMETHING FROM ME?

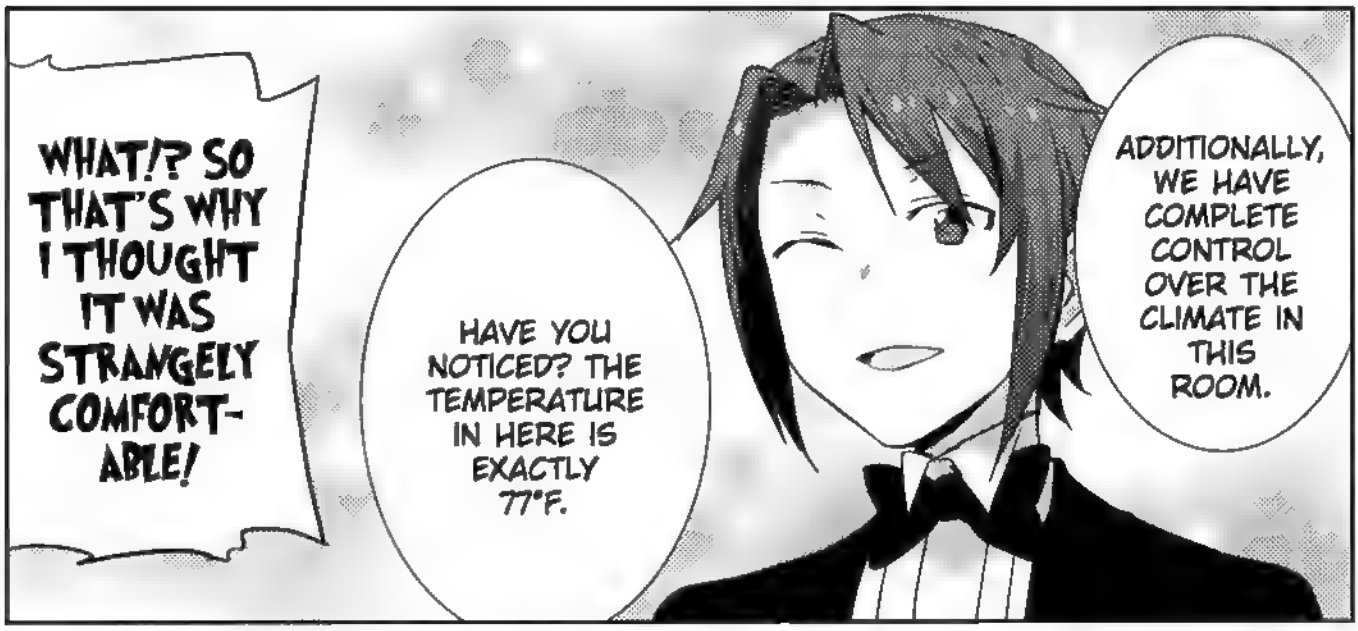
THEN WHO ARE YOU HIDING IT FROM!?
WE AREN'T HIDING ANYTHING, AT LEAST NOT FROM YOU!

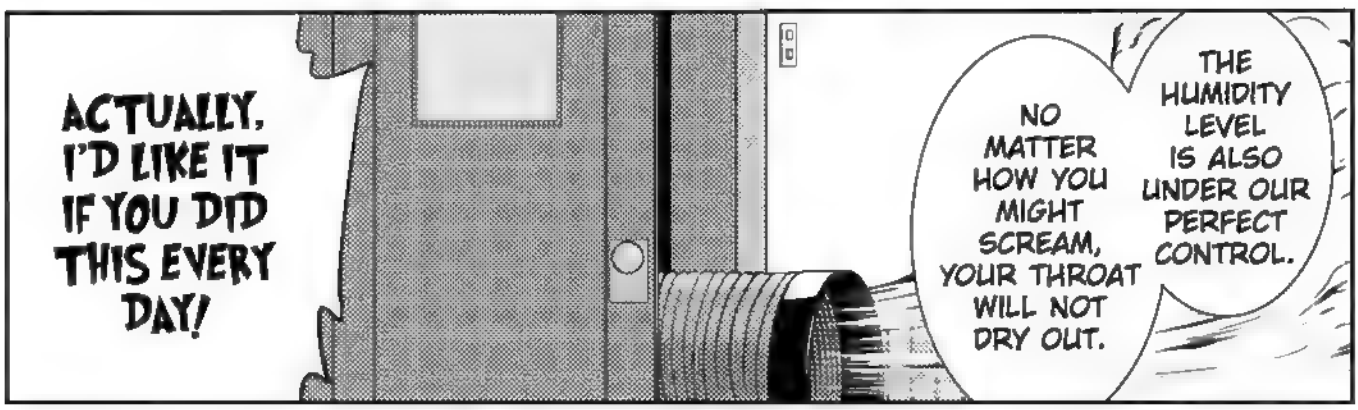
I MEAN, THE SEASON HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH YOUR BIRTHDAY, RIGHT?
FLASH
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT DAY IT IS TODAY EITHER!
OF COURSE IT DOES!!
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, DO YOU, HARUHI?
IT IS IN THAT EXACT MOMENT WHEN YOU ARE TOLD, "HAPPY BIRTHDAY!"
THAT'S WHEN YOUR BIRTHDAY REALLY IS.
DON'T BE FOOLED BY THE DATE!!!
I GET THAT YOU'RE TRYING TO SOUND PROVERBIAL AND ALL, BUT YOU AREN'T MAKING ANY SENSE!


NO! WHAT YOU'RE SAYING DOESN'T MEAN ANYTHING TO ME!
ENJOY THE FACT THAT YOU KNOW THAT IN THIS VERY MOMENT IT IS YOUR BIRTHDAY!!!
WHY DON'T YOU JUST FORGET ABOUT THE DATE AND ENJOY YOUR BIRTHDAY!?

...YOU DON'T WANT TO SAY WHEN MY BIRTHDAY IS!
FOR SOME REA-SON...
BUT I GET IT NOW...

HMPH. SO YOU FINALLY FIGURED IT OUT.
...TO MAKE IT LESS CLEAR WHAT SEASON IT IS!
THE REASON NONE OF YOU ARE WEARING UNIFORMS IS...


WHAT!? SO THAT'S WHY I THOUGHT IT WAS STRANGELY COMFORT-ABLE!
HAVE YOU NOTICED? THE TEMPERATURE IN HERE IS EXACTLY 77°F.
ADDITIONALLY, WE HAVE COMPLETE CONTROL OVER THE CLIMATE IN THIS ROOM.


ACTUALLY, I'D LIKE IT IF YOU DID THIS EVERY DAY!
NO MATTER HOW YOU MIGHT SCREAM, YOUR THROAT WILL NOT DRY OUT.
THE HUMIDITY LEVEL IS ALSO UNDER OUR PERFECT CONTROL.

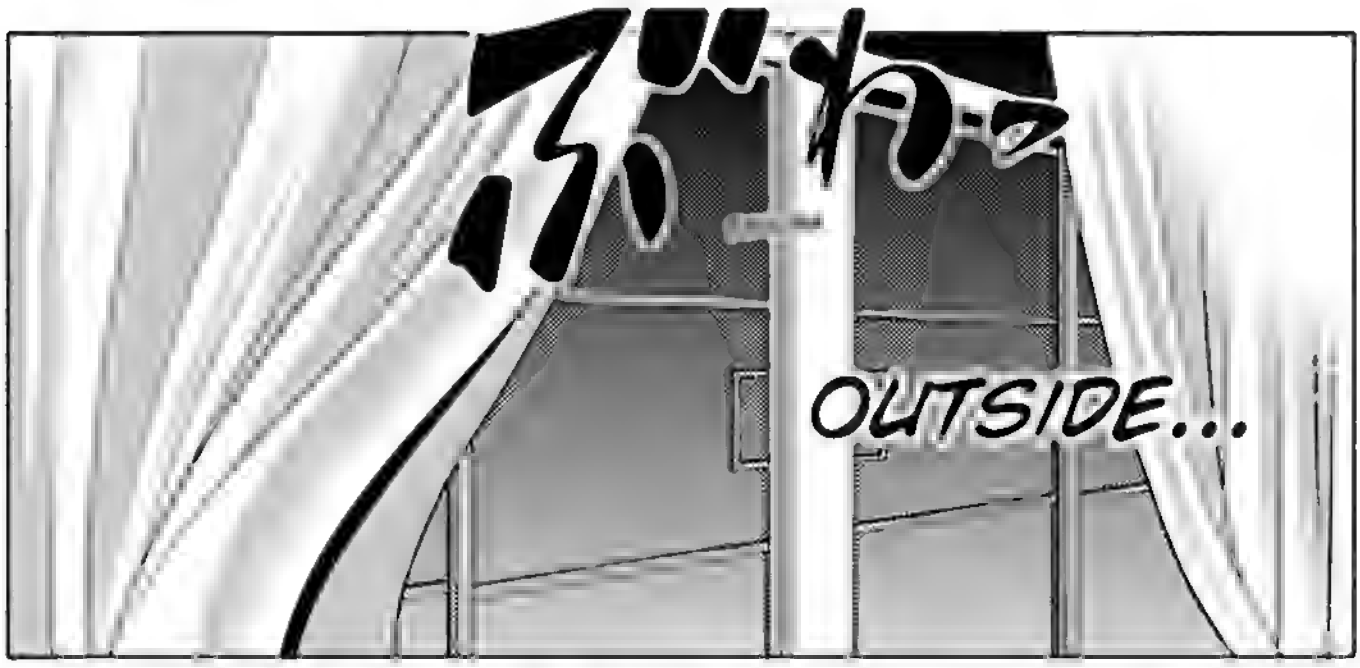
YOU HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING ABOUT MY UNIFORM!
BUT AREN'T YOU FOR-GETTING SOME-THING?

I GET IT NOW...ALL INDICATORS OF THE SEASON HAVE BEEN TAKEN AWAY...

LOOK CLOSELY! SEE WHETHER I AM WEAR-ING A SUMMER UNIFORM OR A WINTER UNIFORM!

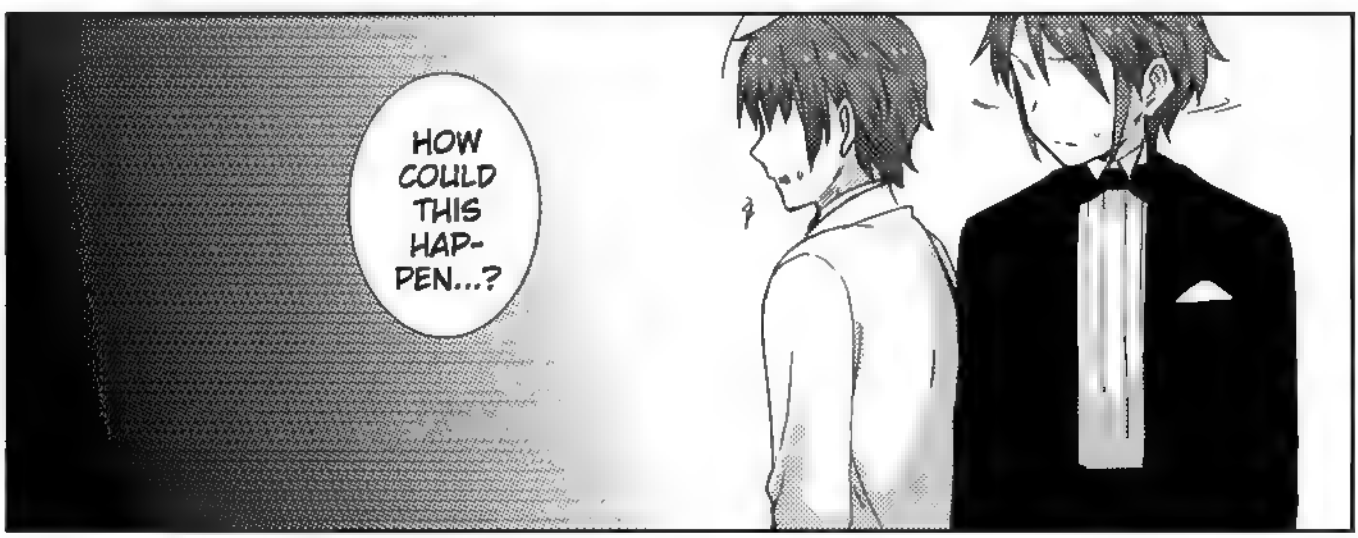
THE PANEL CUT OFF!!
ZWOOM
STAND
HOW ABOUT THAT!? NOW YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO GET A ROUGH IDEA OF—
WHAAAT!?
NOW WHY DON'T YOU GIVE UP AND PUT ON THIS DRESS SO WE CAN SHOW YOUR FULL BODY?
WELL, AT LEAST YOU TRIED, HARUHI.

SUZUMIYA-SAN, GIVE IT UP. THIS IS THE ONLY WAY...
THIS IS THE ONLY WAY THAT WE CAN CELEBRATE YOUR BIRTHDAY!
SUZU-MIYA-SAN...!
I'M SORRY, EVERY-ONE...
...BUT STILL...
...I'M GOING TO STRUG-GLE...
DASH
...TO THE VERY END!


ぶぃーん
OUTSIDE...

IF WE COULD JUST SEE OUT-SIDE.....!

N...
NO...


HOW COULD THIS HAP-PEN...?

NO, WAIT...

WHEN DID IT GET SO DARK OUT-SIDE...?

ド
IT'S INKED OUT!!!

HARUHI SUZUMIYA'S BIRTHDAY IS CURRENTLY UNKNOWN...
THEN DON'T DRAW A COMIC ABOUT IT!
...BUT EVERY LIVING THING HAS A BIRTHDAY.
WELL, YEAH!
SO LET US SAY IT NOW... HARUHI SUZUMIYA... HAPPY BIRTHDAY.
OH, CAN IT!

DOES THAT THING YOU'RE EATING TASTE GOOD?
WELL, IT'S KIND OF CRISPY AND CRUNCHY...

DON'T SPEND A WHOLE YEAR GETTING TO THE SECOND HALF...

HAPPY NEW YEAR!
HERE ARE THREE THINGS THAT HAPPENED LAST YEAR!

KYON ENCOUN-TERED BRAND-NEW FIRST-DREAM BEINGS!

THEY ENTERED MIKURU-CHAN'S FIRST DREAM!

GLOBAL!!
THE FIRST-DREAM BEINGS SUDDENLY DEPARTED!

HEH-HEH. THAT'S WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE.
SO THIS YEAR IT'S YOU GUYS?
UMM... SO...
...THAT THERE WAS NO SPACE LEFT FOR US TO ENTER.
THE BEINGS THAT DWELLED IN YOUR FIRST-DREAM WORLD HAD SUCH INCREDIBLE LEVELS OF FORTUNE...
COULD YOU PLEASE NOT THROW IN ANY MYSTERIOUS NEW POWER STATS?
...UNTIL NOW, YOUR FIRST DREAM HAS BEEN IMPENETRA-BLE.
I SUSPECT YOU WEREN'T AWARE OF THIS, BUT...

I CAN'T SPEAK FOR THE OTHERS...
HEH HEH HEH...
BUT THIS TIME YOUR FIRST DREAM WAS AN EMPTY SHELL...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU DID TO MAKE THEM LEAVE, BUT THAT'S WHY WE'RE HERE NOW.
ISN'T HE THE LEAST BIT EMBARRASSED ABOUT THE WAY HE'S DRESSED!?
...BUT DON'T THINK I'M GOING TO HAVE A GOOD EFFECT ON YOUR FORTUNE!
TH-THIS GUY...

ACTUALLY, OUR SELLING POINT IS THAT WE GIVE A STABLE AMOUNT OF GOOD FORTUNE.
DON'T WORRY, HE'S JUST COFFEE-FLAVORED GELATIN IN THE SHAPE OF MOUNT FUJI. HE CAN'T DO ANYTHING.
YES. FOR EXAMPLE...
STABLE?
...OUR FORTUNE IS LIKE WHEN YOU PEEL A MANDARIN ORANGE AND GET THAT EXTRA LITTLE BONUS WEDGE OF FRUIT!
THAT'S A PRETTY SMALL AMOUNT!

I'D PRESS IT BETWEEN THE PAGES OF A BOOK!
OR LIKE WHEN YOU'RE SEARCHING FOR A FOUR-LEAF CLOVER, AND YOU FIND A FIVE-LEAF CLOVER...
I'M ALWAYS A LITTLE SURPRISED WHEN THAT HAPPENS!
ANOTHER EXAMPLE WOULD BE LIKE WHEN YOU GET AN OLD TEN-YEN COIN THAT HAS THOSE RIDGES ALONG THE RIM.
IT'S THAT SORT OF STABLE GOOD FORTUNE THAT WE BRING TO THE TABLE.
JUST HOW UNCHAR-ACTERIS-TICALLY POSITIVE DO YOU INTEND TO MAKE ME THIS NEW YEAR!?
TH-THIS IS BAD.
IF THEY SOFTEN ME UP LIKE THIS...
...I WON'T LAST A FULL YEAR GETTING DRAGGED AROUND BY HARUHI!!!

HEY, YOU GUYS!!! COME BACK!!!
WHOOSH
FLASH
FROM THE SKY!!!
THIS IS...!
WHAT IS THIS LEVEL OF GOOD FORTUNE!? IT'S OFF THE CHARTS!

KYOOON!!!
WHOOM
YOU GUYS! YOU CAME BACK!?
THE ONLY PLACE WE HAVE TO RETURN TO...
OF COURSE...
どぉん!!
BOOM

ばんっ
TA-DAA!
...IS RIGHT HERE!!!

I TAGGED ALONG.♡
THIS IS THE YEAR OF THE SHEEP. HAPPY NEW YEAR.

WHO IS THAT!?
BIG SIS!?

SEE
YOU NEXT
VOLUME!

SO WE WON'T HAVE THE SOS BRIGADE APPEAR AT ALL.

INSTEAD WE'LL FOCUS ON A GROUP OF FIRST-YEAR NORTH HIGH GIRLS, A SORT OF SILLY, LIGHT-HEARTED THING.

DON'T WORRY. WE'LL MAKE SURE THERE'S A CLEAR DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE ORIGINAL STORY AND OURS.

Robot

Magical Girl

Mysterious Ponytailed

WE'VE MADE IT TO TEN VOLUMES, SO WHY DON'T WE ADD IN AN ORIGINAL CHARACTER?

HUH? WOULDN'T IT CAUSE PROBLEMS TO ADD AN ORIGINAL CHARACTER TO THE SOS BRIGADE?

BUT THAT'S NOT ALL! THEY ALL SHARE A SECRET.

THEY ARE MEMBERS OF A MYSTERIOUS RESERVE ARMY CALLED TOGETHER THROUGH HARUHI'S POWER.

RESERVE ARMY?

WELL, YOU SEE, THEY WOULD BE MAGICAL GIRLS, ROBOTS, VAMPIRES, GHOSTS...

Robot
Magical Girl
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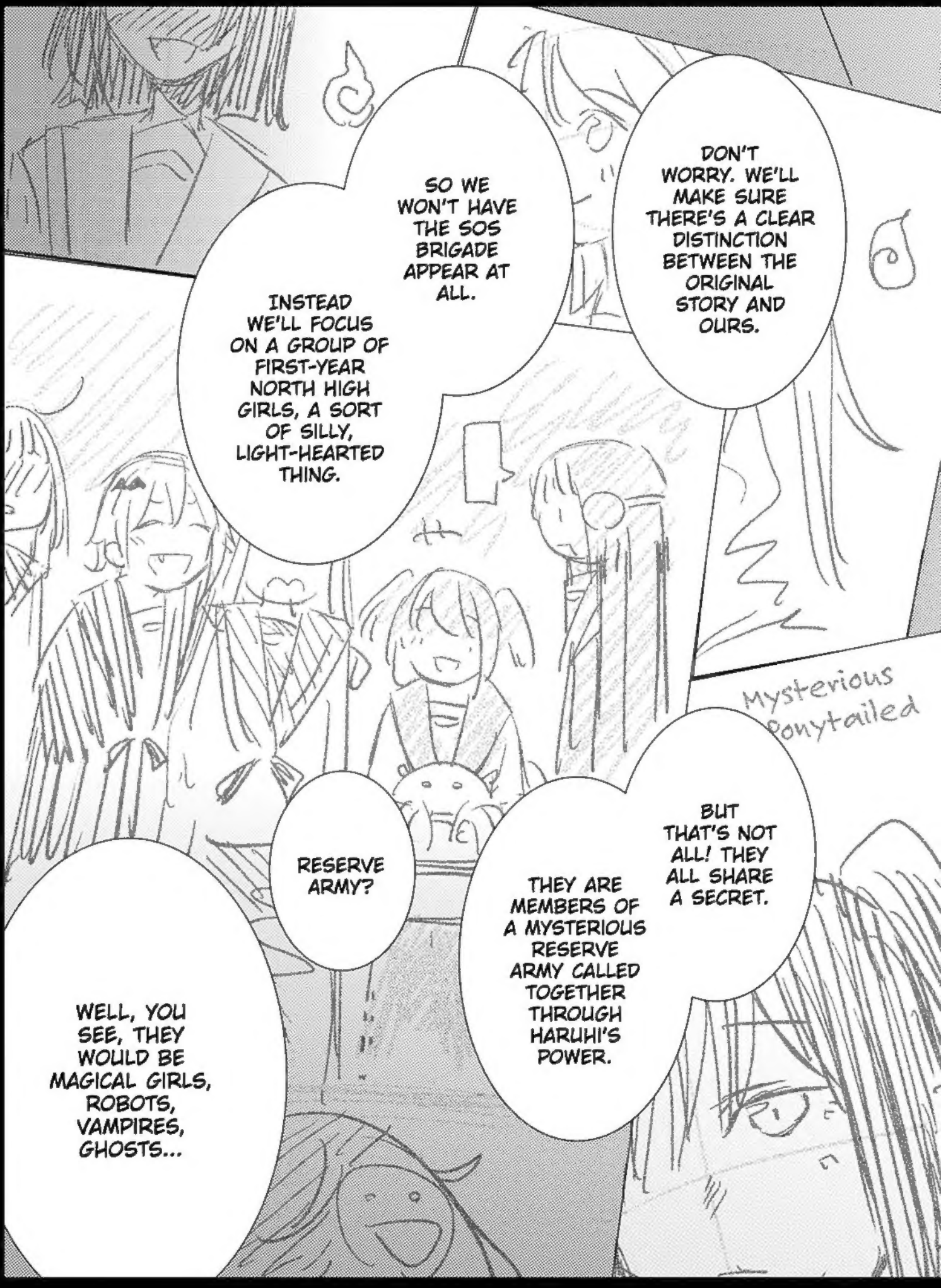
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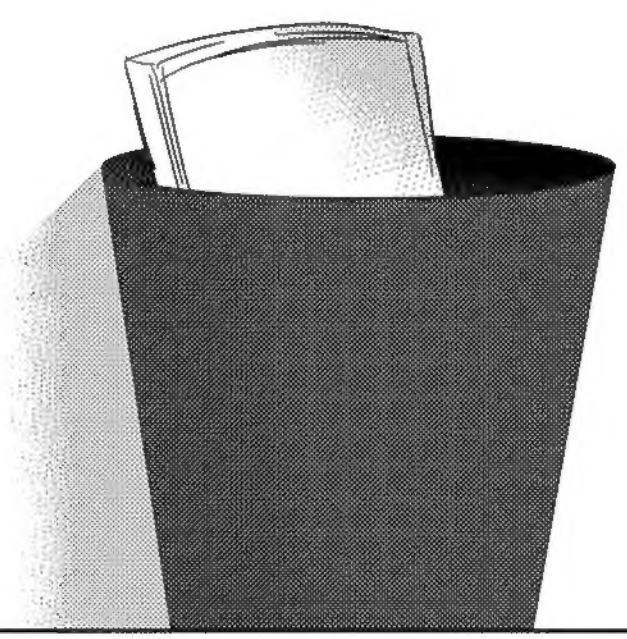
RESERVE ARMY?
WELL, YOU SEE, THEY WOULD BE MAGICAL GIRLS, ROBOTS, VAMPIRES, GHOSTS...

WE AREN'T DISCUSSING ANYTHING LIKE THAT, SO DON'T WORRY.



SEE YOU NEXT VOLUME!!

The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya

10

Original Story: Nagaru Tanigawa
Manga: Gaku Tsugano
Character Design: Noizi Ito

Translation: Chris Pai for MX Media LLC
Lettering: Alexis Eckerman

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